







DOCTORS *AND* DOCTORS.













# DOCTORS AND DOCTORS :

*SOME CURIOUS CHAPTERS IN  
MEDICAL HISTORY AND QUACKERY.*

BY

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Nineteenth Century."*

"The next day Mr. Gambit was told that Lydgate went about saying Physio was of no use.

"Indeed!" said he, lifting his eyebrows with cautious surprise. (He was a stout husky man, with a large ring on his fourth finger.) 'How will he cure his patients then?' "  
*Middlemarch.*

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## P R E F A C E .

**A**LTHOUGH this little book is built upon different lines to those upon which Mr. Jeaffreson's amusing "Book about Doctors" is constructed, I think it necessary to state, that I have not seen that work since it was first published in 1860. If I have referred to it on one or, it may be, on two occasions, the reference has been taken from notes preserved since that time.

Within the definition of "Quackery" I have included the so-called "Miracles" at Lourdes, and the clumsy tricks of those who make a living by the pretence of calling "spirits from the vasty deep." But it must not be supposed from this circumstance that I place *both* on the same platform. Both owe their origin to



superstition; but the advocate of the one is a respectable Catholic clergyman; while the principal supporter of the other is a clumsy showman, whose primary object is *to make money*. If I have dealt unsparingly with the first, it is because a distinct challenge to disprove the reality of these "Modern Miracles" has been offered, and for no other reason. For religious bigotry and intolerance I have no sympathy, and I do not conceal from myself the fact that the belief in the reality of "Modern Miracles" is with many—perhaps the larger proportion of the Catholic clergy, a matter of sincere and conscientious faith. As for the so-called "claims" of "Spiritualism," they seem to me best disposed of in the words of the Vice-Chancellor, Sir G. M. Giffard: "The system as presented by the evidence is mischievous nonsense, well calculated on the one hand to delude the vain, the weak, the foolish, and the superstitious; and on the other, to assist the projects of the needy and the adventurer."

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# DOCTORS *AND* DOCTORS.

## CHAPTER I.

### PHYSICIAN AND CHIRURGEON.

IN the Benedictine convents of Salernum and Monte Casino, as early as the sixth century, the care of the sick was enjoined as a work of piety ; and there diseases were treated, not, indeed, with any medical knowledge, but by means of prayers, conjurations and the exposition or application of relics, which appealed to the imagination and superstition of the sick, and probably assisted in some degree the beneficent efforts of nature to restore her

equilibrium. In the ninth century, books were written by Berthier, Abbé of the convent of Monte Casino, and others. The convents we have named practically acquired a reputation as schools of medicine, and students as well as sufferers of all kinds resorted thither from distant parts. Towards the eleventh century, by translations from the Arabic into Latin of portions of Galen and other Greek and Arabic medical authors, science and the use of natural remedies gradually began—as in the temples of Æsculapius of old—to supersede to some extent the practices of bigotry and superstition. The clerical physicians of Salernum had acquired such a reputation in the twelfth century that they were consulted by Robert, son of William the Conqueror of England, who, on his return from Palestine, disembarked there to be treated for a wound he had received in the Holy Land, and which had been mismanaged by his own attendants.

The Jews, however, at this time also practised physic by the aid of copies of the ancient authors, which they are said to have preserved and studied. They were patronised by crowned heads and other men of rank and influence, who were bold enough to invoke their assistance in the face of the Church's express prohibition. This led, of course, to persecution. By the authority of popes and councils, it was enacted, by the canon law, that no Jew could be a physician, and formal excommunication was obtainable against those who ventured to seek their aid. These laws were stringently enforced against offenders, unless their position were strong enough to resist such anathemas and prohibitions. It may be gleaned from various sources that the principles and practice of these Hebrew physicians were of a far higher order than those of their rivals and persecutors; but, in common with all other sources of light and truth, the records of their practice were trampled under

foot and destroyed, to build up more surely the authority of bigotry, ignorance, and superstition.

It was, however, enjoined by Benedict IX. and Urban II. in the eleventh century, that the clerical physicians should confine their practice *within* the walls of their respective monasteries. But having transgressed these orders, decrees were repeatedly promulgated, forbidding the *prelates, archdeacons, and other superior clergy* from engaging in the practice of any part of medicine; and to the *lower clergy*, whose ignorance and vice were at this time specially notorious, was reserved the right to practise medicine, and to engage in mundane sciences generally, *excepting only surgical operations, and especially the use of the cautery or the knife*, which was opposed to the maxim, *ecclesia abhorrit a sanguine*. Hence, it came to pass that the practice of bleeding and drawing teeth devolved upon the lay brethren, who officiated as servants and barbers of the community, and from this

circumstance the barber craft or barber-chirurgion most probably derived its origin. By these means, in the interval between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries, all *external* wounds, injuries, and ailments were separated from the office of the physician proper; whilst *internal* diseases, whose existence or removal was less easily detected, remained, during this period, the exclusive province of the priest-physician.

The medical statutes of Henry the Eighth's reign throw a very curious light upon the state of medicine and surgery in England during the sixteenth century; and we shall refer to them, not only for that reason, but principally because they have been so curiously misquoted and so transparently misunderstood in some of the books in which we find them referred to. The statute of the third year of Henry the Eighth, cap. 11 [1511], shows us the necessity of legislative interference. It states that "the science and cunning



of physic and surgery (to the perfect knowledge whereof be requisite great learning and ripe experience) were [then] daily . . . exercised by a great multitude of ignorant persons, of whom the greater part had no manner of insight in the same, nor in any other kind of learning; some also can [con] no letters on the book, so far forth that common artificers, as smiths, weavers, and women, . . . accustomably take upon them great cures, and things of great difficulty, in which they *partly use sorcery and witchcraft*, partly apply such medicines unto the diseases as be very noious [*noxious*] and nothing meet, therefore, to . . . the great injury of the faculty, and the grievous hurt, . . . and destruction of many of the king's liege people, most especially of them that cannot discern the uncunning from the cunning." To cure which state of things it was provided that no person in the City of London or within seven miles thereof should practise as a physician or surgeon, "except

he be first approved, and admitted by the Bishop of London, or . . . Dean of St. Paul's for the time being, calling to him . . . four doctors of physic, and for surgery other expert persons in that faculty." Any unqualified person practising as a physician or surgeon was liable for every month he so practised to the penalty therein mentioned. Outside the boundaries of the City, and precincts of seven miles, persons practising as physicians and surgeons were to be examined and approved by the Bishop of the diocese or other persons in the manner therein set forth.

This statute really did more harm than good. If there were, as we shall (in a later chapter) see that there were, many quacks and dangerously incompetent persons dabbling in physic and surgery, there were, on the other hand, a number of charitable persons of both sexes, skilled in the knowledge of herbs, roots, and waters, who attended the sick and afflicted poor, "only," as a

later statute recites, "for neighbourhood and God's sake, and of pity and charity," and not for any sort of fee, or reward. These charitable persons the chirurgeons prosecuted as pretenders under the Act. But the professional gentlemen acted the part of the dog in the manger; for they would neither attend the sick poor themselves, nor would they allow these good and charitable folk to help them. The consequence of this selfish conduct was lamentable; and we are told by a statute passed more than thirty years afterwards, that many persons did absolutely "rot and perish for lack of surgery." Selfish and inhuman conduct of this sort produced its natural consequences, and the legislature was compelled once more to open the door which they had been induced to close. The statute of the thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth years of Henry the Eighth, cap. 8. [1542], recites the previous Act, and the mode in which its provisions had been found to work mischievously and dangerously.

The recital to the second section is very far from flattering to the chirurgeons of the period. It states, that, "although the *most part* of the persons of the craft of chirurgeons had *small cunning*, yet they would take great sums of money, and do little therefore, by reason whereof they oftentimes impaired and hurt their patients, instead of doing them [any] good." In consequence of the facts we have stated, the statute provided that from thenceforth it should be lawful for every person, "having a knowledge . . . of the nature of herbs, roots, and waters, or of the operation of the same . . . to . . . use and minister to any outward sore, uncome [*ulcerous swelling*], wound, apostemations [*imposthumes*], outward swelling or disease, any herb or herbs, ointments, baths, pultess, and compilaisters . . . or drinks for the stone, strangury or agues," without being liable to prosecution or penalty under the statute of the third year of the King's reign. This was not only

throwing the door wide open, which had been closed by the former Act, but it amounted to a statement on the part of the framers of the statute, and of the legislature, that many of the surgeons were "so unskilled in their art, that it was better that it should be thrown open, even at the risk of admitting quacks at the portal.

The influence of the learned Thomas Linacre, with that of others exerted through Cardinal Wolsey, obtained from Henry the celebrated charter by which medicine was finally rescued from ecclesiastical control, and confided to a corporate body of physicians with every facility as well as every obligation to enforce the Act of the third year of the reign, and to exercise increased powers and privileges. The powers and privileges thus entrusted to the College were confirmed and extended by the Statutes 14th and 15th Henry VIII. cap. 5, and 32nd Henry VIII. cap. 10, which entrusted to it the future government of the profes-

sion of medicine as well throughout England, as in London and its precincts.

The only other Act remaining to complete our survey is the well-known statute of the thirty-second year of Henry VIII. cap. 42 [1540], by which the barbers and surgeons of London, therefore, "two several and distinct companies of surgeons," were made one company and incorporated; the third section, however, providing that no person in "the City of London, suburbs, . . . and one mile compass of the said city, . . . [then or thereafter] using barbery or shaving . . . should occupy *any surgery, letting of blood, or any other thing belonging to surgery, drawing of teeth* only excepted."

This Act affords incontestable evidence that between the barbers and the surgeons of this period there was "much of a muchness." Mr. Timbs, in his collection of *Ana*, which he styles "Doctors and Patients," opines that the

barbers were "considered the most respectable of the new guild," because of "their adopting, and petitioning to be distinguished by, the style and title of the *mystery* of barbers." If, however, Mr. Timbs had looked into his Johnson, he would have found the third meaning of "mystery," thus given by that very learned authority: "A trade; a calling; in this sense it should, according to Warburton, be written *mistery*, from [the French word] *mestier*, a trade," in which sense we may further add it is used by Spenser, Shakespeare, and others of the old poets, dramatists, and writers.

There were "chirurgeons *and* chirurgeons," of course, but the dense ignorance of the great mass of the surgeons of this and the three succeeding reigns may be judged by the statement made by a medical writer of the time of Elizabeth. "How many" [chirurgeons], he asks his contemporaries, "shall a man find . . . that have learning? For the most part being ignorant and void of all

learning, yea, and know almost no part of Anatomy (which is most necessary for a chyrurgeon); cannot scarce heale a green wound, and some there be that can scant let a man blood (which is a handsome and pretty feat, and yet not so hard a thing to be done). Nor will apply a ventose, called otherwise a cupping glasse, unless they put the man to pain and trouble. There be some that esteem themselves so well exercised and perfect in the art, that they think that no cure can come amisse to them: they will enterprize and take in hand all manner of cures, be they never so hard or incurable: for they have fear of nothing, but rashly goe to work in all things. They will cut, they will launce, they will cauterise (which they call searing with a hot burning iron), they will cut off a leg or an arme of the body, they will use corrosives that shall pierce even unto the hard bones, and they will make an issue almost for every trifle, and for



every disease, without considering the circumstances of the whole matter, nor weighing the strength, the age, and the complexion of the body, besides many other things that are greatly to be considered in such cases. And possible it is many times that the patient hath need of some inward medicine, which the chyrurgeon can, nor may well give, without the Physitians counsell."

Although much of this was doubtless true, some of it must be received with the usual "grain of salt." The reader must remember that the physician of this period (himself a surgeon) looked askant at the surgeon proper (as he afterwards did upon the apothecary) as one who had trespassed on his own domain. That anatomy was studied by the surgeon of that day, is shown by the work of Thomas Vicary, Sergeant Surgeon to the Queen, and "chief chirurgeon to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, who "compyled," and pub-

lished in 1577, when *English* books were rare, his "Profitable Treatise on the Anatomy of Mans Body;" and that the study of anatomy as well as of other science was not neglected by lights of lesser magnitude, is proved by the advice given by "John Halle," a chirurgeon practising at Maidstone in 1565, who thus insists on the importance in surgery of general, as well as of professional knowledge:—

"Not only in chyrurgerie,  
Thou oughtest to be experte,  
But also in Astronomie,  
Both privye and aperte.

"In Naturall Philosophye,  
Thy studye should be bente;  
To know eche herbe, shrubbe, roote, and tree.  
Must be thy good intende.

"Eache beaste and foule, wyth worme and fishe,  
And all that beareth lyfe;  
Their vertues and their natures bothe,  
With thee oughte to be rife.

"But chieflie the anatomye,  
Ye oughte to understande;  
If ye will *cure* well anythinge,  
That ye doe take in hande.

## DOCTORS AND DOCTORS.

"For by the same above the rest,  
Ye shall greate fame deserve ;  
The life of man from many streightes,  
To save and well preserve.

"Withoute the knowlege of which arte,  
Thou canste not chose but erre ;  
In all that thou shalte goe aboute,  
Thy knowledge to preferre.

"As if ye cutte or cauterise,  
Or use phlebotomye ;  
Ye can not but erre in the same,  
Without anatomye.

"He is no true chirurgien,  
That can not shewe by arte,  
The nature of everye member  
Eche from other aparte.

"For in that noble handyworke,  
There doth nothing excell,  
The knowledge of anatomye,  
If it be learned well.

"Endeavoure therefore by all means,  
The same to knowe and conne,  
For when thou hast it perfectly,  
Thine arte is halflye wonne."

Although incorporated with the brethren of the  
mystery," the surgeons, in no long time, began  
show that they were more than anxious to be  
tinguished from their associates. It seems, in-

deed, an odd fellowship, judged by the light of the nineteenth century; but, at the time of the incorporation, as we have said, there was "much of a muchness." As the chirurgeon<sup>d</sup> ascended the ladder of knowledge and experience, the barber, or barber-chirurgeon as he now called himself, seems to have remained very much as the Act had found him. The ignorance and incompetency of the gentlemen of the "mystery" was a favourite subject of comment with the skilled chirurgeon of succeeding reigns. Many strange examples are given by Sir Richard Wiseman, Sergeant Surgeon to Charles II., 1676. Here is one of them. "A young fellow who was servant to a horse courser, was thrown off his horse against some of the barrs in Smithfield, whereby the calvaria or hairy scalp was torn up from the coronal suture to the temporall muscle on the left side; the skull was bared about twò or three inches in breadth. He was led to the next barber, *who cut the piece off, and*

*hanged it up in his shop. The day after the patient was brought to me," says Wiseman, "I caused the hair to be shav'd off from above the wound, and dress'd the bone and lips with lini-mentum arcei warm, and embrocated the parts about cum ol. rosarum and chalomeli, and apply'd emplastrum ebolo over the wound, with compress and bandage rowling up his head. He had been let blood the day before [by the barber], without consideration of the great quantity he had lost from his wound: I continued the former way of dressing, etc. Thus it was cured as wounds with loss of substance, a troublesome and vexatious work to the patient and chyrurgeon, which might at first have been cured by agglutination [cohesion], with a less cicatrix, and thereby he might have enjoy'd the natural tegument of his hair, whereas that part remained bald and unseemly." The barber-chirurgion, in fact, instead of leaving nature to heal herself, had scalped his patient as effectually.*

as any Red Indian savage could have effected the process.

Daniel Turner, chirurgeon (writing in 1695), says that some of these men, in addition to their *poles* and "frame of porringers," "had the impudence," as he terms it, to hang the arms of the surgeons outside their shops. The little knowledge he had, the barber-chirurgeon of this period picked up in a very hap-hazard fashion. He was first a barber's apprentice; then he went, perhaps, to sea, and became, after his first or second voyage, without difficulty, a surgeon's mate, starting afterwards in business on his own account. As a barber-chirurgeon he discoursed, we are told, learnedly of "fractures, dislocations, gangreans, mortifications and amputations." Turner would have us understand that as regards surgical knowledge "the sea professor and the town pretending barber" stood very much on a par. He is anxious at the same time that we shall not confound either the barber

or this "sea professor" with the orthodox naval practitioner of the time. "I would not be thought herein," he says, "by any means to reflect on those legal and ingenious practitioners employ'd in his Majesty's Naval Service, but what I have spoken hereto is on account of the great abuses committed by those shameless intruders on the practise, who by *making friends to the supervisors* have clandestinely procur'd the titles of *chyrurgeons mates*, to the no small detriment and personal damage of the King's good subjects, whose health and lives in the chyrurgeon's absence, are in the hands of those so lately Barbers and apothecaries Servants."

"'Tis not many years since," he continues, "that a mere novice, in surgery, humbly requesting a grant for the office of a *mate* upon a tryal, if he was fitted for the discharge of such a trust, when he was ask'd, what he thought was the *first intention* in the treating of a penetrating puncture in

the *thorax*, reply'd, he had never seen such a thing in his life. Being further question'd, if he knew where the said part, *viz.*, the *thorax* was situate in a humane body, he as ignorantly pointed to the hypogastrick region of the *abdomen*, and might (according to his judgment), as well have shown the palm of his hand: yet this person, as I am credibly inform'd, quickly after obtain'd his desire, and got off to sea," in other words, obtained the appointment for which he was so utterly unfitted.

Turner gives numerous cases in illustration of the ignorance of these fellows, the following is one: "A certain noted sea practitioner had, some time since, a patient here on shore who was afflicted with a malign *Paronichia* [*whitlow*] on his finger, which he treated so long with suppuratives that the ligaments were corrupt, and the bone carious; at length there happening a spontaneous discharge of *pus*, the sinuosity was dilated, and the bone



denudated for exfoliation. Now to recover his former negligence in suffering the malignity to lye so long conceal'd, he as prejudicially drest the patient with *Basilicon* and *Oyl of Hypericon*, laid immediately on the bone, whereby the putrefaction and caries encreas'd, a large *fungus* thrust out, and, after all, there was a necessity for *amputation*, which was speedily perform'd." Gross ignorance of this sort, Turner adds, was by no means an uncommon experience.

He relates that on one occasion he bled a patient under the following circumstances. She had, in the first instance, gone to a barber, and had left him in much alarm. She was a very corpulent woman, with "limbs of the largest size, and withal so fat that her veins were neither visible, nor indeed (by what I perceiv'd) at all perceptible to the touch." This puzzled the operator, who, after much fumbling, "finding no other part that was tense and, perhaps to his apprehension

turgid, as *the tendon of the biceps*," after some hesitation expressed his opinion that "*this* was certainly the vein, but it lay so very deep as made him fearful he should not pierce it." After the neck-or-nothing fashion of his tribe, however, he boldly plunged in his weapon, and had not Providence interposed, would undoubtedly have made a breach in the tendon which would have been beyond his skill, and probably beyond the skill of any other operator, to repair.

Our only object of course in mentioning these cases is to give a *practical* idea of the shocking ignorance of these barber-chirurgeons of old. The provision in the Act that a person practising "barbary" or shaving should not let blood or practise surgery, had been long openly and scandalously evaded; but it was not until 1745 that the odd co-partnership between the barbers and surgeons was severed by the statute 18th George II., cap. 15, such Act providing that "the art and science of

surgery" could no longer be practised by the company of barbers.

The portrait given us by John Earle of the physician of his time—of the reigns, that is to say, of Elizabeth and James I.—like many other supposed portraits drawn by himself and the learned Sir Thomas Overbury, is simply a caricature, and nothing more. The learned gentleman, according to our authority, was "distinguisht from an Empiricke" only "by his round velvet cap and Doctor's gowne. . . . Sworne to Galen and Hippocrates," he knew absolutely nothing of these learned authors, his only medical reading being confined to "Alexis of Piemont," or the "Regiment of Health." As for his learning, it consisted "in reckoning up the hard names of diseases, and the superscriptions of gally pots in his Apothecary's shoppe." The *real* truth was that the physician of this time was not only deeply read in all the *then* accepted authorities of his profession, but he was in other

respects a learned scholar and a gentleman. Take Linacre (1460-1524) by way of example. Linacre, besides his medical translations, wrote on mathematics and grammar. Of his translation of Galen, Erasmus spoke in the highest terms of praise; and when writing to a friend to whom he was sending a copy, he said, "I present you with the works of Galen, now, by the help of Linacre, *speaking better Latin than they ever before spoke Greek.*"

At the time John Earle wrote his so-called "Cosmographie," or series of satirical sketches, to which we have referred, it was the almost universal practice of the intending physician to commence his classical studies at Oxford or Cambridge, after which he went on the Continent for the purpose of prosecuting a purely professional training at the great medical schools of Montpellier and Padua. It was at Padua that Fabricius ab Acquapendente, the professor of anatomy at the close

of the sixteenth century,\* drew the special attention of William Harvey to the existence of valves in all the veins of the body, and thus set the mind of his pupil on those inquiries which ended in his imperishable fame. It was at Padua that Harvey took his doctor's degree in 1602. The same year he returned to England, and having again graduated at Cambridge (where he had previously been in 1593), settled in the practice of his profession in London.

Sir Thomas Browne, the celebrated author of the "Religio Medici" (1605-82), another typical physician of the time, entered in the year 1623 as a gentleman commoner at Broadgate Hall, after-

\* Acquapendente was the most celebrated physician, and Spigelio a no less renowned surgeon of this time. Both were called in, with ten other medical men as assistants, by the Council of Ten, when the famous Fra Paolo (Sarpi), the spiritual adviser of the Republic of St. Mark, was stabbed at Venice, on the 5th of October, 1607, at the instigation of the unscrupulous Pope Paul V. The friar got well in spite of them. Acquapendente received, as a recompense for having saved so valuable a life, knighthood, and a silver cup of thirty ounces, with the winged lion of St. Mark engraved thereon.

wards known as Pembroke College, Oxford. After taking his M.A. degree, he turned his studies to physic; and to complete his medical education, prosecuted his training at Montpellier and Padua, and afterwards proceeded to the University of Leyden, where he took his doctor's degree. Thomas Sydenham (1624-89), sometimes called the English Hippocrates, after being elected a fellow of All Souls' College, and remaining some time at Oxford studying his profession, took his doctor's degree at Cambridge. On leaving the English Universities he travelled to Montpellier, at that time the most celebrated school of physic in Europe, in quest of further experience; and in 1663, when in his fortieth year, and after being long known as a practitioner, was admitted a member of the College of Physicians in London.

That this was the established routine is shown us, not only by the biographies of the learned physicians of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seven-

teenth centuries, but by a medical writer of 1670. The author of the "Accomplisht Physician," writing in that year, recommends the student in physick, after a certain course of study at home, to travel for the purpose of acquiring a knowledge of foreign practice. At Paris, for instance, he would visit every day for a year the hospitals of "l'Hostel Dieu and La Charité." Here, twice a week, he would meet with M. Janot, the most celebrated surgeon of the age, and see how he performed the operations of "trepanning, amputating," and other chirurgical treatment, "with the greatest dexterity possible." At Montpellier, where he would stay another year, he would meet "with a concourse of the greatest Proficients in Physick of Europe." At Padua he would visit "the famed Hospital of San Lorenzo, and observe the Italian method of curing diseases by [a course of] alterative Broaths, without purging or bleeding." Having resided here for the space, say, of six months, he might then "justly

aspire to a degree of Doctor in Physic, which the fame of the place should persuade him to take here, being the Imperial University for Physic of all others in the world, and where Physicians [are expected to] pass a very exact scrutiny and severe test." From thence, our authority recommends him to go on to Bologna, and pass three months at the hospital there. Last of all, "our doctor must not neglect to extract something . . . out of the eminentest practitioners at Rome," frequenting the "three renown'd hospitals of San Spirito in the Vatican, San Giovanni Laterano on the Mount Celio, and San Giacomo di Augusta in the Valley Martia," besides others whose names are also given.

And yet this was the learned gentleman of whom Captain Alexander Radcliffe, following the example of his predecessor, Earle, wrote, during the seventeenth century, the following lines, which Dryden, in his well-known contempt and dislike for the



faculty, has thought fit to preserve in his curious  
"Miscellany" collection:—

"'Mongst gilded books on shelves you squeeze  
Old *Galen* and *Hippocrates*,  
For such learn'd Men (say you) as these  
I'll stickle.  
*Tho' what they were you cannot tell,*  
*Giants they might have been as well,*  
*Or two Arch-Angels, Gabriel*  
*And Mich'el."*

The practitioners of medicine, however, laboured under special disadvantages. They were groping their way in the darkness through a region with the geography of which they were necessarily imperfectly acquainted. We say "in the darkness" advisedly, for though there were many lights, they had, for the most part, little illuminating power, and the region was so vast that they rendered little real assistance. There was much theoretical learning, but very little practical knowledge. The stars and planetary bodies were supposed to have a direct influence, even a causal effect, upon disease. The astrologer was one who professed to foretell or

discover events depending on these astral influences; and hence it came to pass that, among the acquirements of the physicians of the time of Elizabeth and her successor, a knowledge of "astrology" was deemed absolutely necessary. *Medicus sine cæli peritid nihil est* was the dogma of the schools. In Goodall's "History of the Royal College of Physicians," we find, at the examination of a candidate of James I.'s reign, the following learned question and equally learned answer:—

"Being asked in *astrology* what house he looked into to know [the nature of] a disease, or *the event of it*, and *how the Lord ascendant should stand thereto*? he answereth, he looks to the sixth house; which being disproved, he saith, he understands nothing therein but what he hath out of *Caliman*; and being asked what books he hath read in the art, he hath [read] none but *Caliman*."

The astrological acquirements or pretensions of the physician of his time are referred to by

Ben Jonson in his *Staple of News* [1625].

Act IV., Sc 4:—

“The doctor here . . .

When he discourseth of dissection,

Or any point of anatomy ; that he tells you

Of vena cava and of vena porta,

The messaricks and the mesenterium :

What does he else but cant ? or if he run

To his *Judicial Astrology*,

And trowl the *Trine*, the *Quartile*, and the *Sextile*,

*Platic aspect*, and *Particle*, with his *Hyleg*,

Or *Alchochoden*, *Cuspes*, and *Horoscope* ;

Does not he cant ? Who here does understand him ! ”

## CHAPTER II.

### THE GREAT PHYSICIAN-APOTHECARY WAR.

THE frontispiece to "The Doctors Dispensatory," published in 1657, pictorially represents the distinct duties of the physician and the apothecary: the one to counsel, advise, and prescribe for patients; the other to make up or dispense *for the physician* the medicines contained in his "prescript." The frontispiece is divided into two portions. The first shows us two friends who have come to consult a physician. The learned gentleman wears his round velvet cap and doctor's gown, the then distinctive professional dress of his order, and holds up to the light a bottle containing a fluid, the nature of which we have no difficulty in

guessing. On the table, ready to hand, lie the materials for writing his prescription; while his shelves groan with the ponderous tomes of Galen, Hippocrates, the Arabian, English, and other learned and voluminous medical authorities of his time. The second division shows us the interior of the apothecary's shop. The physician's servant hands over the counter the "prescript" to be made up in accordance with his master's directions. The interior of the apothecary's place of business corresponds as nearly as possible with the interior of a druggist's shop of the present day. There is a still at work, just as you may now see one at work in the laboratory behind the druggist's shop. Bottles rest on the shelves, similar to those in use at the present time; and on the counter and among the appurtenances, we notice the pestles and mortars and nests of drawers with which we are so familiar. The chemists and druggists of the present day were altogether unknown at the time

this rough woodcut was designed, for the apothecary was the only authorised pharmacopolist of the period, and it was not until he stepped out of his sphere, crossed the border, and invaded the province of his patron the physician, that room was made for the man who, in the course of years, gradually slipped into the old shoes which he abandoned with so much contempt.

The details of this curious invasion—which was confined to English soil, and led to the very peculiar position in which the different members of the medical profession stand to each other at the present day—possess a singular interest for the general body of patients; yet we believe we are correct in saying, that outside the limits of the learned profession these details are little known. In order that the reader may understand *how* the apothecary came to pass the boundary which separated him from the profession, it is necessary that we should know—first, something of the nature

of the duties of the early apothecary; and, secondly, just a little of his early history.

As the business of the ancient physician increased—we are now going back to the very foundation of medicine itself—as suffering humanity flocked to him in search of counsel, consolation, or restoration to health, he soon found that he had not leisure to attend to his patients, and also to prepare the physic which they required—some of them with as little delay as possible. Hence grew up the practice of sending the “prescripts” (as they were called) of the physicians to persons whom they had taught the science of compounding and dispensing medicine accurately. These men came to be called apothecaries—men whose business it was to keep and make up medicines for and on behalf of the physician.

The nature of the duties of the two men is indicated in the “Book of Jesus, the son of Syrach,” commonly called “Ecclesiasticus,” one of those

books which are "neyther found in the Hebrue nor in the Chalde,"\* which are not in the Jewish canon, which were rejected as apocryphal by the Council of Laodicea, but which, nevertheless, command our respect by virtue of their antiquity and the quaint wisdom and sublimity of their language. "Honour," says Ecclesiasticus, "the physician with the honour due unto him, for the uses you may have of him, for the Lord hath created him. For of the Most High cometh the healing, and he shall receive honour of the king. The skill of the physician shall lift up his head; and in the sight of great men he shall be in admiration. The Lord hath created medicines out of the earth; and he that is wise will not abhor them. Was not the water made sweet with wood, that the virtue thereof might be known? And He hath given men skill that He might be honoured in His marvellous works. With such doth He heal men, and

\* Bible, 1539.



taketh away their pains. Of such [medicines] doth the *apothecary* make a confection" [*a mixture*].\*

Dr. Nathaniel Hodges, one of the doctors mentioned by Defoe in his "Journal of the Plague Year," writing in 1666, nearly fifty years after the invasion to which we have referred had commenced, clearly defines the duties of the apothecary, by a quotation from Renodæus, which we shall give preferentially in its English translation:—

"It is the apothecary's business to meddle with medicaments only, and in relation to their use to follow the physician's prescript; and that he may be fitted to execute his office he must be instructed to know simples, to select the choicest, to prepare and compound his medicines." "The servile parts of the art of healing," says another writer, of four years' later date, "were committed to such as are now called chyrurgeons and apothecaries. The former were employed in applying external medi-

\* "Ecclesiasticus" xxxviii. 1.

cine to external diseases," while the latter were engaged "in preparing all ordinary internal and external medicines, according to the exact prescriptions and *directions* of the physicians."\*

And what extraordinary compositions were occasionally "prepared" under the authority of these same "prescriptions and directions!" We may fancy the cost of an apothecary's bill, when he sent, as he has been known to send under the direction of the old physician "an ounce of pearl in a cordial emulsion." Some of these learned gentlemen, in caps and gowns, prescribed for their credulous but wealthy patients, "*bees præpared in the winter*, or four or five ounces of peach kernels *in the spring*." Sometimes, on the authority last quoted, they ordered a "restorative electuary" to be compounded of "parrots' tongues and hawks' livers." Under these circumstances, "you need not to stair," adds our quaint informant, "if your bill

\* "The Accomplisht Physician," 1670, p. 51.

[that is to say the apothecary's, to say nothing of the physician's fees] amounted to pounds sterling!"

The office of the apothecary, imported originally from Italy and France, had been performed in England, like it was abroad, by the "Pepperers" or grocers. The spices and aromatics of the east were early imported to the shores of Italy, and the south of France, where it became the province of the so-called "*speciarii*" and *épiciers* of those respective countries to perform the duties of apothecaries. The "Company of Grocers," incorporated in this country as early as the year 1345 (time of Edward III.) continued to be the chief preparers and dispensers of medicine down to the date of their union with the apothecaries in 1607, forming in that year the new "Company of Grocer-Apothecaries."

Nine years afterwards, "the propriety of separating the Apothecaries' from the Grocers' Company"

was declared by the charter granted to them 13th James I. (1616), whereby the king granted "that, the apothecaries should be separated from, and constitute a company distinct from that of the grocers;" and by such charter, the persons therein named or described were incorporated under the name of the "Master, Wardens, and Society of the Art and Mystery of Pharmacopolites of the City of London," to the intent that "No person free of the Grocers' or any other mystery in London, except those of the Apothecaries' Company shall keep any apothecary shop, or make, compound, administer, sell, send out, advertise, or offer for sale, any medicines, distilled waters, compound chemical oils, decoctions, syrups, conserves, eclegmas,\* electuaries, medical condiments, pills, powders, lozenges, oils, unguents, plasters, or otherwise."

It would seem that long before the invasion

\* "A form of medicine made by the incorporation of oils with syrups, and which is to be taken upon a liquorice stick."—*Johnson*.

which caused such heart-burning to the physician, the public had been in the habit of dealing direct with the apothecary without the intervention of the learned gentleman. Robert Greene, in his *Quip for an upstart Courtier* (1592), shows us that the man of the people, typified by the satirist under the title of *Cloth-Breeches*, seldom entered the shop of "Master Apothecary"—scarcely, indeed, "once in seven years," and then only to purchase may be "a pennyworth of worm-seed to give his child to drink, or a little treacle to drive out the measles," or mayhap, "some dregs and powders to make his sick horse a drench" withal. The man of fashion, "queasy *Master Velvet-Breeches*" on the other hand resorted to him habitually for every ailment, real or imaginary. He "must have his purgations, pills, and glisters. . . . If the least spot of *Morphew*\* came on his face, he must have his oil of tartar, his

\* *Morphew* was a leprous eruption on the face: in this case, however, it evidently meant a slight irritation, such as all skins are liable to at times.

*lac Virginis*, his camphor dissolved in verjuice, to make the fool as fair, forsooth, as . . . Maid Marian in a May game or Morris-dance." Nay, he could not digest his food "without conserves, nor end his meals without suckets [*sweet-meats*]." He required other drugs for other purposes, on the subject of which our authority speaks with a freedom scarcely adapted to a work of general reading,—certain oils and waters the cost of which seem to have been something like "ten pounds a pint." If Master Velvet-Breeches, in consequence of drinking all this physic, happened to have an offensive breath, "then forsooth, the apothecary must play the perfumer, and make it sweet" again. It would seem, therefore, that long before the invasion was recognised, "Master Apothecary" and the outer world of patients had been in communication together with reference to the sale and purchase of drugs, conserves, and other wares, and that "Master Velvet-Breeches" even invoked the professional

assistance of "Master Apothecary" without the sanction of the physician.

Dr. Frederick Davies in his valuable work on "the Unity of Medicine," to which we are indebted for a few hints in this and the preceding chapter, seems to date the practical invasion of the physician's province by the apothecary from the year 1618, but fixes the latter part of the seventeenth century, shortly after Harvey's death, as the time when the "rival body of unlicensed and unqualified practitioners . . . arose in full force in the persons of the apothecaries." Long before this time, however, the doctors had been complaining of the mode in which their interests were being prejudiced by their assistants. Dr. Jonathan Goddard, physician to Oliver Cromwell, points out, in a manner which appears strange to outsiders, the advantage which the apothecaries possessed, not only from their knowledge of the preparation of medicines, but from the fact that they were

enabled to make use, for their own purposes, of the physicians' prescriptions on their books. If the patients knew their real interest, he contended, "they would take no such satisfaction as they seem to do *in the visits of apothecaries*, but rather wish them in their shops to make or oversee the making of their medicines, *prescribed by physicians*, which are left to their servants, many times raw and slovenly apprentices, while their masters spend their time abroad, physician-like, in visiting." Goddard suggests as a remedy for this state of things that physicians should take the dispensing of medicines into their own hands, and for this reason recommends them to peruse "the London Dispensatory," which with a little trouble might, he says, be soon and easily epitomised.

In spite of his dislike to them, Goddard is constrained, nevertheless, to admit that the encroachers had invented several "new medicaments." It cannot be denied, he owns, "that in this course some



empirics [*i.e.*, apothecaries] have stumbled upon very considerable and effectual medicaments, wherewith, in some particular cases, *they have outdone learned physicians*; and by the advantage of making their own medicaments, they bear up and will do, till they be outdone" by the experiment which he had before advised his brethren to adopt.

The innovation—the thin end of the wedge—would appear to have been introduced by the physicians themselves. "When menial assistance was required," says Dr. Davies, "they [the physicians] sent their subordinates to officiate, who were also *their apothecaries*; and thus it was that the apothecary became, in addition to his original and only proper occupation of a preparer and compounder of medicines, a sort of subordinate practitioner or assistant to the physician himself;" and the reason why he was pressed into the service of the physician was undoubtedly the dearth of

qualified doctors in the seventeenth century. As his services were required by his principal, he acquired, as a matter of natural consequence, an increasing confidence in his own powers; and the mere fact of his assisting his principal, directly led, of course, to the public reposing confidence in himself. He had the advantage, moreover, as Goddard pointed out, of preparing and understanding his medicines, which it would seem, in Goddard's time at least, the physicians did not. This train of circumstances could lead, of course, to only one result. In no long time the apothecary became the physician's rival instead of his assistant; and when his class assumed a position which the superior body recognised as an antagonistic one, civil war could not be, or perhaps we should rather say was not, long delayed.

Retaliation began in this way. In the year 1687 the college passed a vote, ordering all the members to give their advice gratis to such of the

sick poor as desired it; and in order to render this vote more effectual, another was passed on the 13th August, 1688, that the laboratory of the college should be fitted up for the purpose of preparing medicines, and the room adjoining as a repository or store-house. The members of the college, however, were not a united body. Many of them had a large *clientèle* amongst the apothecaries, who habitually consulted them in cases of doubt or difficulty. The apothecaries at once saw the real design of these orders, and brought their influence to bear upon their medical coadjutors; and by this means the design was practically frustrated. The order was again renewed, and again defeated. The members of the college at this time were about ninety in number, and fifty-three of them entered into a sort of joint-stock company to supply medicines "gratis to the poor sick of London and Westminster and other parts adjacent." The instrument by which this was

effected was dated 22nd December, 1696, and by it the subscribers agreed each of them to pay to Thomas Barwell, Fellow of the College, £10 to be expended by him in preparing and delivering medicines to the poor in the manner therein mentioned. Amongst the number who signed this document we find the names of Hulse, Sir Hans Sloane, Sir Samuel Garth, Woodward, and Gideon Harvey. Many men of some note, however, belonged to the minority, and among them Dr. William Gibbons. That the confederates had determined to oppose their rivals, and supersede the apothecary in his own legitimate rights, is proved by the fact that dispensaries were some time after established, not only at the college (then in Warwick Lane), but also in Cornhill and in St. Martin's Lane, and the confederate physicians themselves admitted that, "besides the poor, many rich and noble persons had been furnished with medicines in their respective cases from these dis-

pensaries" of theirs. As for the "sick poor," the poor are recognisable everywhere; but to enjoy the benefits of the new dispensary, these "poor" were required to bring certificates of their poverty, signed by the rector, vicar, or curate of the parish in which they dwelt, *and also by the churchwardens and overseers*—a needless, useless, and most vexatious formula, which at once disposed of every usefulness. Fancy a sick child, parent, or relation, at the point of death, and the unfortunate friend who had *immediate* need of assistance being sent to obtain the signatures of six or seven of the most narrow-minded men in the parish, many of whom were probably seldom at home!

Thus it came to pass that a company of physician-apothecaries, so to speak, was banded "in opposition" to a company of apothecary-physicians, each of whom, by encroaching on the duties and privileges of the other, broke down the hitherto acknowledged distinction" in their separate and distinct employ-

ments. Light field guns in the form of pamphlets, poems, etc., were planted by the confederate physicians to breach and demolish the entrenchments of their enemies. One of these, called "Physic lies a-Bleeding," by Thomas Brown, (published in 1697), took a dramatic form, its object being to expose the ignorance of the apothecaries, and the enormous prices which they charged for physic. Jack Comprehensive, one of these men, relates to his fellows a case which was supposed to happen in his own practice. A patient suffering from a corn had applied to him for relief; Comprehensive, we need not say, bled him, and applied caustic with such vigorous impartiality that it not only eradicated the corn, but penetrated to the bone itself, and produced a "handsome ulcer." The result was an illness of eleven weeks' duration, and an apothecary's bill for medicines of £132 12s. 8d., which the patient compounded for at £100. The cost out of pocket to the learned gentleman it appears

was £6 17s. 6½d. only, leaving £93 by way of profit on eleven weeks' bungling.

*Trueman*, the single honest character, represents really, though not ostensibly, the interest of the confederate physicians. He is described as "a gentleman of honest principles," who wishes "each person to act in his own sphere only." *Trueman*, in his character of friend of the public, complains of the exorbitant prices of the apothecaries, and of the injury done not to the physicians, but the poor; and the prices, although enormous, appear to have been those actually demanded and paid for drugs at this time. It must not be forgotten that the apothecaries, to evade the penalty under the College Statutes, charged nothing whatever for attendance, but took more than compensation for this generosity on their medicines.

But the gun which inflicted the greatest damage on the apothecaries and their medical allies was the once celebrated satire of "The Dispensary" by

Sir Samuel Garth. Lee, the warden of the Apothecaries' Company, was ridiculed under the name of *Colon*; Dr. Barnard, one of the "amphibious fry," as he is called, is represented by *Horoscope*; and other well-known doctors and apothecaries under various aliases. The interior of Barnard's shop and style of practice is amusingly described:—

\* Here mummies lay most reverently stale,  
 And there the tortoise hung her coat o' mail;  
 Not far from some huge shark's devouring head  
 The flying fish their finny pinions spread.  
 Aloft in rows large poppy heads were strung,  
 And near, a scaly alligator hung;  
 In this place, drugs in musty heaps decay'd,  
 In that, dry'd bladders, and drawn teeth were laid.

An inner room receives the numerous shoals,  
 Of such as pay to be reputed fools;  
 Globes stand by globes, volumes on volumes lye,  
 And planetary schemes amuse the eye.  
 The sage, in velvet chair, here lolls at ease,  
 To promise future health for present fees;  
 Then as from tripod, solemn shams reveals,  
 And what the stars know nothing of, foretels."

But the physician who comes in for the largest share of satire is Dr. William Gibbons of King Street, Covent Garden, the "Nurse Gibbons" of



John Radcliffe,\* who figures in the poem as *Mir-millo*. As one of the principal allies of the apothecaries, no mercy, of course, is shown him. The fatal results of his practice he is made to tell himself:—

“Oxford and all her passing bells can tell,  
By this right arm what mighty numbers fell.  
While others meanly ask’d whole months to slay  
I oft dispatch’d the patient in a day :  
With pen in hand I push’d to that degree,  
I scarce had left a wretch to give a fee.  
Some fell by laudanum, and some by steel,  
And Death in ambush lay in every pill ;  
For save or slay, this privilege we claim,  
Tho’ credit suffers, the reward’s the same.”

The apothecaries, of course, gratefully acknowledge the value of his services:—

“Each word, Sir, you impart  
Has something killing in it, like your art,  
How much we to your boundless friendship owe,  
Our files can speak, and your prescriptions show.  
Your ink descends in such excessive show’rs,  
’Tis plain you can regard no health but ours.  
Whilst your pretenders puzzle o’er a case,  
You but appear, and give the coup de grâce.”

\* Gibbons was appointed physician to the Princess Anne, when Radcliffe was dismissed : *Hinc illæ lacrymæ*.

The poetical amusements of the much-abused Dr. Richard (afterwards Sir Richard) Blackmore, who wasted a great deal of time in indifferent "numbers," which might have been more conscientiously employed in the consideration of his patients' cases, offer, of course, an inviting attack, which is delivered by a quotation of some *rumbling* rhymes from his *King Arthur*; and the literary amateur is advised to correct his sense and his verse alike by a diligent perusal of the works of Dryden, Addison, Congreve, Prior, and (of all men in the wide world) Wycherley.

The "Dispensary," now practically unread, was written in 1696; but the first of its many editions did not appear till 1699. It is curious to note the number of apothecaries at or about this time, as compared with the number in other countries. In Hamburg there was only one; Stockholm and Copenhagen boasted only four or five in each

city; in Paris there were fifty-one; whereas in London and the suburbs there were nearly a thousand.

Garth had complimented Dryden in his satire; and, as poor Dr. Blackmore, a strictly moral man had taken the liberty of censuring the libertine writers of the day, among whom Dryden, according to his own confession, stands pre-eminent, the poet characteristically paid off the score in his poem of the *Cock and the Fox*, in which, while sneering at Gibbons, he transferred the charge of wholesale manslaughter to *Maurus* (Blackmore), whose medical blundering, he alleged, had swept "whole parishes and peopled every grave,"—a bitter and malignant charge for which there was not a shadow of foundation. Dryden condescended to admit that although the physician had failed to find the tree of knowledge, he had somehow or other contrived to stumble on the bark. To the action of the confederate physicians, and the relation in which they

stood to their opponents, he alludes in these lines:—

“Yet wandering in the dark,  
Physicians for the tree have found the bark :  
They, lab'ring for relief of human kind,  
With sharpen'd sight *some remedies may find* ; }  
The apothecary train is wholly blind.  
From files a *random* recipe they take,  
And many deaths of one prescription make.  
*Garth, generous as his muse, prescribes and gives ;*  
*The shopman sells ; and by destruction lives.*  
*Ungrateful tribe ! who like the viper's brood,*  
*From Medicine issuing, suck their Mother's blood !*  
*Let these obey ; and let the learn'd prescribe*  
*That men may die, without a double bribe :*  
*Let them, but under their superiors, kill ;*  
*When doctors first have sign'd the bloody bill.”*

After an artillery duel of this kind, the confederates made their attack. It happened in this wise. William Rose, an apothecary, it appeared, had treated John Seale, a butcher, professionally ; had charged him for his advice and attendance all that they were worth,—nothing ; but the bill for medicines was quite another matter. It amounted to the good round sum of £50, and Seale went over in a fright to the enemy, and said Rose had all but killed him,—which was

doubtless true. The physicians brought an action against Rose. The jury were very difficult to convince, and were at first disposed to shelter the defendant behind the principle that "they all do it;" but they found for the physicians, subject to a question left to the decision of the judges, which was shortly this: Whether the fact of compounding and sending "to the said John Seale several parcels of physic as proper for his distemper, taking only the price of his drugs," without prescription or advice of a doctor, was "a practicing of physic such as was prohibited by the statute," and this point the judges unanimously decided in favour of the College.

It was clear that this decision was bad law. The apothecaries appealed on a writ of error to set aside the judgment. The practical main point they relied on was this: that no fee had been taken or demanded for attendance or advice. Practically this was unanswerable, for the apothecaries

as tradesmen had a right to dispose of their drugs to any one who paid them for them. The physicians relied, in a great measure, on their own cheap dispensaries, the enormous price charged by apothecaries for their remedies, and the impolicy of permitting a mere apothecary to attend to dangerous diseases, where the services of a skilful physician could be as easily obtained. All this might have been true, but it was beside the point. The defence failed all along the line; and the Court decided that the judgment given in the Queen's Bench for the president and College or Commonalty of the faculty of physic in London, against the said William Rose, should be reversed. Dr. Davies describes this decision as the "thin end of the wedge . . . which, in the following century, completely destroyed the distinctive character of either office;" but it was in truth very much more than this. The "thin end of the wedge" had been introduced, as we have seen,

nearly a hundred years before by the physicians themselves, and the decision had driven the wedge thoroughly home. It established, *virtually*, the principle that, so long as the apothecary received no *fee* he had a right to visit and prescribe. The mere effect of this decision in making it the obvious policy of the apothecary-physician to supply an unlimited amount of medicine to his patient, we, of course, have nothing to do with. We have only to deal with its ultimate result. It was the origin of the "general practitioner" of our own times; and led to the practical effacement out of England of "Master Apothecary" altogether.

But the physicians, it will be remembered, had not *all* joined in the attack; there was a substantial minority who had not given their assent to the joint-stock "dispensaries," who had not identified themselves with this unfortunate "test action," and these henceforth became the virtual

coadjutors of the victorious apothecaries, who, by the opposition shops of the hostile majority, were to have been driven from their own exclusive and legitimate ground. The apothecaries rewarded the friendly minority by consulting them\* exclusively in cases of doubt or difficulty; and the physician was thus indirectly called upon to sanction (if he could not approve) the quantity, variety, and expensive form of medicine which the apothecary who consulted him had previously administered to his unfortunate patient. The thing was all wrong no doubt; but it was only the natural result which follows the breach of an Act of Parliament, through whose flimsy provisions you might drive not only the proverbial coach and six, but three—six—fifteen horses abreast.

If the physician grumbled, we are not inclined to pity him. He had created his Frankenstein; he had tried to kill the monster whom he had at least materially assisted in calling into being, and



Frankenstein, as was only to be expected, objected to be got rid of after this summary fashion. The physician who had preserved a friendly neutrality found in the long run that his policy was a paying one. The practice grew up of the physicians of the early and middle part of the last century making the coffee-houses their *rendezvous*,\* where, either at Tom's or at Batson's, they met their apothecary clients, who furnished them with written or verbal reports of cases, for which the learned gentlemen prescribed *without seeing the patient* at half-guinea fees. If the fees were not high, the advice, it must be remembered, was not very valuable. The number of London physicians was but small. Even so late as 1795 there were not a hundred of them altogether, while the apothecaries numbered upwards of four thousand. At last

\* Sir Richard Blackmore pleaded in answer to his literary or poetical critics : "I am only a hard-worked doctor, spending my days in coffee-houses, receiving apothecaries, or driving over the stones in my carriage visiting patients."

came the Act of 1815, entitled, "An Act for better regulating the practice of apothecaries in England and Wales," whereby the distinction in the office of physician and apothecary was (that is to say, for all practical purposes) obliterated.

But time did not eradicate the old feeling of hostility; and, although the author of the "Dispensary" has been dead the best part of a hundred and seventy years, it is not eradicated at this moment. So late as 1837 we find the doctors complaining of the medical practice of apothecaries as an unwarrantable intrusion upon the province of the physician. Dr. Millingen maintained that they [the apothecaries] "could only be skilled in making up medicines," or had "obtained experience in the lessons taught by repeated failures in their early practice, unless perchance they had stepped beyond the usual confined instruction of their class." They lived, he tells us, by selling drugs,

which they unmercifully supplied, to the material injury of the patient's constitution. "If, after ringing all the changes of their *materia medica* without causing the church-bell to toll, they found themselves puzzled and bewildered, a physician or a surgeon of some eminence was called in, and too frequently these practitioners were bound by tacit agreement not to diminish the revenue that the shop produced. If it were necessary," continues Dr. Millingen, "to prove the evils that result from the monopolising powers vested in corporate institutions, the proof might be sought and found in the virulence and jealousy which they evince in resisting reform, from whatever quarter it may be dreaded; and it may be said that too many of the practising apothecaries of the present day [*i.e.* 1837] stand in the same relative situation in the medical profession *as the barbers of olden times.*" As we have been careful in a former chapter to show him what "the barber of olden times" really

was, the reader will probably be inclined to doubt whether this statement was in any degree true. No doubt the general practitioners of 1837 included in their ranks some men whose practical knowledge of the art of healing was defective; but to say that they stood on a par with "the barbers of olden times" is a statement which carries on its face the evidence of its own absurdity. It was a graver charge, in fact, than that which had been brought against their predecessors—the unqualified apothecary-physicians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; and if the reader will refer to the "Annual Register" of 1830, he will find that the course of study required of the apothecaries by the new regulations of that year, will bear favourable comparison with the course of studies required of the members of the other branches of that period.

Possibly it was one of the angry physicians represented by Dr. Millingen, who inserted the

following advertisement which we find in a paper of the time:—

**W**ANTED, for a family who have bad health, a sober, steady person, in the capacity of doctor, surgeon, apothecary, and man-midwife. He must occasionally act as butler, and dress hair and wigs. He will be required sometimes to read prayers, and to preach a sermon every Sunday. A good salary will be given."

We doubt not, however, that there was cause of complaint half a century ago; and that the profession are still dissatisfied is shown by the statement of Mr. Rivington, made so lately as 1879:—  
"The class of general practitioners has been divided into the dispensing and non-dispensing orders:—1. The *dispensing order*, which is distinguished by the fact of supplying medicines to patients, may be again sub-divided into two chief groups or sub orders—(a) The *surgeon-chemist*, or the red-bottle and blue-bottle practitioners, who combine the work of medical men with the retail business of a chemist. An open shop is kept, with glass-cases containing tooth-brushes, nail-brushes, patent medicines, seidlitz powders, Eno's fruit salt,

soap, scents, delectable lozenges, chest protectors, and feeding-bottles. The retail trade is the great source of emolument, and could not be given up without serious damage to the business. (b) The *surgeon-apothecary*, with an open surgery and a red lamp. No retail trade is done, but advice and a bottle of physic is given for a moderate sum—a shilling is a common charge in the poorer neighbourhoods. A few in this and the preceding group keep medical dispensaries and attend patients for a small weekly payment varying from two-pence to one shilling. As the scale is ascended the surgery retires more and more into the background, until it reaches the interior of the dwelling, where it is no longer exposed to the vulgar gaze. At last it disappears entirely, and the second sub-order is attained, or that of the *non-dispensing consultant order*.\*

\* "The Medical Profession." (First Carmichael Prize Essay, 1879,) p. 55.

At the date of the "Apothecaries' Act" (1815), apothecaries were distinguished from chemists and druggists by the fact of *compounding* medicines: the latter *sold* drugs, but they did not compound the prescriptions of physicians. When, however, the practice of attending on and prescribing for patients was legalised by the Act of 1815, the chemists and druggists encroached on the previous province of the apothecary by making up prescriptions. Many of them (as is well known to the profession) still further encroach, by secretly treating diseases for their own benefit. There is, in fact, a remarkable tendency in classes of individuals to encroach upon the province of other classes belonging to a scale above themselves, and thus it is that "History repeats itself." The apothecary now practises medicine, and is empowered to compound and dispense medicines for his own patients, as a licentiate of the College of Physicians.

## CHAPTER III.

### SOME OLD PATIENTS.

FOR the classes or sects of persons who suffered persecution and bodily injury in support of their religious or politico-religious opinions, and who, on the upheaval of their own end of the political seesaw, conscientiously persecuted and inflicted bodily suffering upon those who had done them wrong we entertain—we confess it,—the profoundest respect. Human nature, and we have seen much of what is called “human nature” in its various phases, is much the same in all ranks and conditions of men, although the mode of displaying its peculiarities may differ according to the prejudices of the powers in being, and the school.



of thought in which the individuals collectively composing those powers may, respectively, have been trained. A Protestant of the age of Philip and Mary thought it hard that he should be burnt because he declined to accept the doctrines of the Church of Rome; while the Catholic of the time of Elizabeth resisted with equal sturdiness the idea of being turned into a Protestant under the same dulcet and persuasive influences. The Church of England men of Elizabeth, James, and Charles I. cruelly persecuted their Nonconformist brethren who differed with them on the subject of Church discipline and Church ceremony, while the Nonconformists of the Commonwealth and the Protectorate treated with much harshness, injustice, and cruelty the late Church of England parsons and their sympathisers. We regard each and all of these sufferers with sympathy and respect, and none the less, because the sufferings they endured were inflicted under the fraudulent and iniquitous

pretence that those who inflicted them were actuated in their doings by the principles of *Christianity*.

The martyrs in the cause of science stand on a widely different footing. They had no intention of figuring in the character of martyrs at all, and in considering their position, we are hampered with no prejudice of a political and *so-called* religious, but really selfish and sectarian character. Among them we should place in the front rank, of course, the unselfish men who have lost their lives while engaged in experiments for the benefit of posterity; the second we cheerfully accord to those who, on early battle-fields, in primitive operating-rooms, or in the solitude, mayhap, of their own bed-chambers, have fallen involuntary victims to the tentative efforts of the early professors of physic and surgery. That the members of this last class did not intend to become victims; that they had no sort of belief in the skill of

their medical and surgical advisers; that they resorted to them simply on the principle which urges the drowning man to clutch at a floating straw or fragment of drift-wood, seems to us to make small difference—little difference at this distance of time, happily, to the victims themselves. The men or women who voluntarily or involuntarily, knowingly or unknowingly, submitted to blundering (euphemistically termed scientific) experiments, from which we unintentionally derive advantages which are simply priceless, are entitled to our unstinted gratitude and respect. Such men and women were our respected forefathers and foremothers. Let us, then, in gratitude to those who have so long passed over to the great majority, who endured so much suffering from which we derive so much benefit, take off our hats in respectful salutation to this noble army of martyrs.

Take tooth-drawing by way of an example: only imagine, for instance, the changes which have taken

place—the improvements which have been made in the art and mystery of dentistry, now elevated into the art of “dental surgery,” since the Princess Mary—better known to us, perhaps, by her unfortunate, historical nick-name of “Bloody Mary,” submitted herself to the forceps of the royal surgeon, Nicholas Sympson. On the 19th May, 1536 Anne Boleyn had been murdered on Tower Green: the very next day the brutal, lustful husband was married to Jane Seymour, her maid of honour. Eighteen months afterwards—that is to say, on the 24th October, 1537, Queen Jane, having previously given birth to a son, happily, perhaps, for herself, had died a natural death, instead of under the axe of the headsman like her unfortunate and interesting predecessor; and on the next day the ministers of Blue-Beard were already looking far and wide for her successor. Mary caught cold at the lying in state of Queen Jane in Hampton Court Chapel. The vigil was performed on several

successive November nights, and the cold settled in her face; whereupon Blue-Beard sent his surgeon, Nicholas Sympson, to draw one of her teeth. We may fancy the instrument, and picture to ourselves the scene which followed. Looking at Mary's own position with reference to her brutal father, consequent on her standing out for her mother's rights and her own legitimacy, it is not unlikely that she deemed herself fortunate that it was Sympson, and not a more sinister official, who paid her a professional visit on this occasion.

The statutes of the reign of Henry VIII. have thrown a curious light on the state of surgery at this period, and in a subsequent chapter we shall show you the pretenders into whose hands the wounded in the campaigns of this time were liable to fall. The tendency of nature to heal herself seems to have been very imperfectly, if indeed it was *at all* understood. Instead of bringing the edges together, and endeavouring to unite them

“by the first intention,” a wound in those days was filled with dressings and acid balsams, or distended with tents and leaden tubes, in order that it might be forced into a painful suppuration, which was considered absolutely indispensable to effect a cure. Every flap of skin, instead of being re-united, was cut away; every open wound was dressed as a sore, and every deep one plugged up with a tent, *lest it should heal*. Tents, syndons, seatons, leaden canulas, and strong injections, were among the chief implements of old surgery. The lips of a wound were never put together; if it was not large and free, the rule of the old surgeon was to dilate it, but never with the knife. With a pair of hideous forceps, representations of which may be seen in the old chirurgical books of the time of Henry VIII., and even of a much later date, they *tore* it open; they seldom made counter openings to let out the matter, and so it was an absolute miracle if the most simple wounds were

not forced into malignant sores. These long tents thrust into wounds of the neck and cheek, made the neck or head swell enormously. In compound fractures they thrust their dressings *betwixt the ends of the broken bones*, as if they had been afraid of the formation of callus.\*

As for the virtues of cold water, they were wholly unsuspected; so much so, that when a quack of the name of Doublet cured the wounded at the siege of Metz in 1553, the water he used for the purpose was supposed to possess magical and mystic properties. It was his policy, indeed that it should be so considered; and Brantome tells us that, although his strange cures were effected with simple white linen dipped in clear spring or well water, he accompanied the applications with spells and words of incantation, clearly proving his own undoubted right to the title of

\* The bony matter which is deposited between the fractured ends of the broken bones, and serves to re-unite them.

quack. Doublet was probably acquainted with an ingenious treatise on gun-shot wounds, written by Blondi in 1542, in which he strongly advocates the use of cold water; but if this was his source of knowledge, he wisely kept it to himself. Previous to this simple and efficacious method of assisting the operations of nature, various extraordinary applications were held in high esteem. Among the learned a favourite remedy was the oil of kittens, a mysterious compound prepared by boiling *live* cats, coat and all, in olive oil; this ingenious and subtle composition went by the name of *oleum catellorum*, and would have been infinitely more serviceable had the cat element been omitted altogether.

The simple method of dressing wounds, especially those that were inflicted by firearms, by the application of cold water, was an inestimable boon to the wounded soldiers; for, previous to this innovation, injuries of this kind had been treated by the



application of scalding oil or red-hot instruments, under the impression that being inflicted by lead or iron, which were supposed to be of a poisonous nature, the wounds themselves were poisoned. Ambrose Paré, <sup>\*</sup> called the "Father of French Surgery," (1509—1590), was one of the first army surgeons who exploded this barbarous and dangerous practice, and, like many other great discoveries, it was the result of an accident. Having, according to his own account, exhausted his stock of boiling oil, he was driven to invent a mixture of yolk of egg, oil, and turpentine, not without serious apprehension of finding his patients suffering under all the effects of poison in the morning. The result opened his eyes; and to his unmitigated astonishment he found them in a far better condition than those to whom the boiling oil and cautery had been applied, in accordance with previous chirurgical practice.

To men of the nineteenth century the ignorance

we have attempted to describe may seem inexplicable, and the nineteenth century casuist may be excused if he proceeds to form from it conclusions which are both hasty and unjust. "Here is a surgeon," we think we hear him say, "a man of science, ignorant at starting of the efforts which Nature is capable of exerting on his behalf—ignorant of the healing properties of cold water, of the nature of which, indeed, the very brutes may be said to have known better than he." Now, although these observations are to some extent true, they are nevertheless unjust—unjust at least to this extent, that no allowance is made for the position in which the sixteenth or seventeenth century man stands with regard to him of the nineteenth; and until this allowance is made, it is certain that the former cannot be properly or fairly understood. We will endeavour to explain that position by a somewhat homely illustration. The man who has resided many years in an out-

of-the-way neighbourhood must understand its geography better than an absolute stranger; and although the latter may find his way to his destination in spite of the devious roads and bridle paths by which he is surrounded, the chances are that in reaching it he will lose his way. Now the early surgeon stands to ourselves exactly in the position of the inexperienced stranger. If we know our way, there is every reason why we should make allowances for the man who does not. In order that we may do justice to the early surgeon, allowance must be made not only for the man himself, but for the time in which he lived—the prejudices, the traditions, the credulity of his craft, and the superstition and narrow sympathies of the age in which we find him. As professional knowledge increased, as attention was paid to the study of anatomy, surgery made rapid advances in the direction of improvement, until in the days of Harvey (who in 1610, discovered the circulation of

the blood) bold and important operations began to be attempted. The extreme clumsiness and brutality, however, with which they were performed could scarcely be credited, had not those who operated left descriptions behind them. Writing on the subject of tumours, the preceptor of Harvey describes what he considers to be an improved and easy mode of operation, in the following fascinating terms: "If it be a movable one," he says, "I cut it away with a *red hot iron*, that *sears* as it cuts; but if it be adherent to the chest, I cut it without bleeding with a *wooden or horn knife*, soaked in *aquafortis*, with which having cut the skin, *I dig out the rest with my fingers*." If this was surgery less than three hundred years ago, do we not well in describing our respected ancestors, whose anatomy was first aquafortised and afterwards "dug into" with nails, we may be sure not always of the cleanest,—to say nothing whatever of the red hot knife, boiling oil,

and red, hot cauterising irons,—a “noble army of martyrs”?

How well nature could perform her own cure, without the assistance, and apparently without the knowledge of these learned gentlemen, how her operations were assisted by the credulity and superstition of the patient himself, is shown by the reputation which attached to the so-called treatment by “sympathy.” Of the *sympathetical ointment*, invented by the learned professor rejoicing in seven names, out of which we have selected the single one of Paracelsus (1493—1541), Purmann, “chief chirurgon of the city of Breslau, and of the hospitals of St. John and All Saints,” writing so lately as 1706, admits that persons had written against it, “some think with reason enough, as *Willichius Libavius*; but who,” he triumphantly asks, “can contradict matters of fact and daily experience, or how could I have called this book “*Chirurgia Curiosa*” if I had said nothing of it?”

This unguent appears to have been compounded *inter alia* of red wine, earthworms, human skull, etc., etc. "The moss" of a man's skull who had been either killed or hanged, "gathered [of course] when the star Venus ~~was~~ predominant, or at least two or three days after a *new moon*, if it could be had," was considered a powerful addition to the other ingredients. Barbette, a French surgeon, instead of the "moss," employed "man's fat and blood" (on the principle possibly that they were more come-at-able) with oil of linseed. The following are the "directions for use":—"Take the weapon or instrument wherewith the patient was wounded, while it is bloody, or instead of it a stick put into the wound that it may be bloody. Anoint it with the *unguent* about a hand's breadth, and wrap it up in a clean linen rag or paper, your hands being very clean, and then lay the weapon or stick in a place neither too hot nor cold. Two or three days after anoint

it again, and so for four or five times, *till the wound is well. The patient in the meantime must keep the wound clean, and cover it with a fine linen rag, without applying any medicine to it.* If it should chance to bleed very much, apply a piece of fuss-ball to stop it, and then proceed as before."

Of these directions, the words we have printed in italics are of course the only ones of any value, and if extracted will be read as follows:—  
"Keep the wound clean and protected from the air, and Nature will do the rest." Purmann, who relied wholly on the stick, the "moss," the red wine, earthworms, and other abominations, combined of course with the influences of the moon and stars, gives a case in illustration of his views, which will amusingly expose the credulity of the worthy surgeon and his patient:—

"In August, 1676, at the beginning of the siege of Stettin, Captain de Barke, of the regiment of

General Golzick, was wounded upon the forepart of the head by the fall of a grenado of three pound weight, which made a wound upon his skull as large as a crown piece. It bled extremely, and the grenado being made of glass, it left eleven pieces of glass in the wound. Having taken out the pieces of glass, I stopt the wound with my powder." The captain was sent away next day with other wounded to another place, and committed to the care of the "chirurgion of the Douanish regiment; but the captain, having great confidence in me, and knowing what cures I had *performed by this ointment*, desired me to treat him in the same manner" [*in his absence*], "and give him directions how to manage himself. The small pieces of glass, because but little blood stuck upon them, I put into swine's lard, and put a small stick into the wound [to] make it bloody, which I anointed every other day with the unguent, and wrapt a fine linen rag about it. Four-



teen days after I saw him again, and the wound [had] almost healed, *though he had applied nothing to it but a linen rag*, and that on the twelfth and thirteenth days two other pieces of glass came out of the wound. In fine, he was perfectly cured in a month, and in five weeks came back to the army." Could anything be more convincing than this? How can you (in the words of the worthy but singularly ignorant surgeon) "contradict matters of fact and daily experience?" Between this officer's skull and hand-grenades,\* however, there existed a curious sympathy. The next year (1677), while storming some place with an unpronounceable name, he was again struck on the head with an iron grenade, this time so effectually that not all the sympathetic unguents

\* Grenades were much used at this time and for many years afterwards. A Grenadier corps armed, each man with a pouch of hand-grenades, was established in France in 1667. In England (from 1685) a company of grenadiers was attached to many regiments. The grenade was a small but most destructive instrument at close quarters.

in the world would have brought him back to life again.

The *idea* of the "sympathetical powder" which Sir Kenelm Digby professed to have invented, and of which you have already heard so much, was stolen of course from Paracelsus. Purmann speaks favourably of it, but confirms none of the absurd stories which Digby himself related or permitted to be related in connection with it. What it was made of—whether of ingredients medicinal in character, or absolutely detrimental and injurious to health—matters nothing, the result was the same. The idea that Nature winked at this nonsense so long as she was permitted to do her own wise work never once occurred to this very simple "chief surgeon of the city of Breslau," who was never more successful than when he left his patients severely alone.

The wounds inflicted in former days by arrows, by arquebus, and by hand-grenades, were more

amenable to the operations of Nature than those inflicted by rifle or revolver, to say nothing of practical possibilities such as the dynamite bombs of Chicago. If Nature failed to help, it was simply because her powers and her wishes were alike misunderstood and disregarded. A stout man in old days, judging at least by the experience of Sir Thomas Darcy, might stand up in his armour, and receive the crack of a cannon ball without its doing him serious mischief. The gallant gentleman was struck at the battle of Pinkie [1547], "glancing wise on the right side" by a ball from a Scottish field-piece; but the only result which followed was, a bruise by the "bowing in of his harness," a broken sword hilt, and a trifle in the shape of a flattened forefinger. Sir Arthur Darcy was no less fortunate. The "special correspondent" of the period reported that he was "flashed at with swords, and so hurt upon the wedding-finger of his right hand," that "it was counted for the

first part of medicine to have it quite cut away.”\*  
In modern warfare where anything has to be cut away it is usually something more serious than “wedding finger.”

From the slight sketch we have given, it will be seen that, although the surgeon of the sixteenth century was superstitious and credulous, unsuspicious of the beneficial influences of Nature and the healing properties of cold water and “cold pads,” his art, nevertheless, was steadily progressing. The surgeon had a great advantage over his scholarly brother, the physician, for the reason that the former could see what he was doing, and the result of his remedies, whether administered by himself or by Nature behind his back, which the latter could not. The knowledge of the physician was theoretical rather than practical, and some of his theories are of so grotesque a character, that we might wonder how the man who could indulge

\* Patton's “Diary of the Expedition into Scotland,” 1547.

in them could by any possibility have been called a "learned" man. "Learned"—in a professional sense—he certainly was not. In a treatise, written by Dr. Caius [1510—1576], he gravely informs us of the medical properties of a well-known lap-dog, to which he gives the name of "Spaniel Gentle": "These little dogs," he tells us, "are good to assuage the sickness of the stomach, being often-times thereunto *applied as a plaster preservative*, or borne in the bosom of the diseased and weak person, which effect is performed by their moderate heat" [to say nothing of their fleas]. Moreover, the disease and sickness changeth his place and entereth—though it be not precisely marked [in what way] into the dog, which, to be no untruth, experience can testify. For this kind of dogs," says the learned physician, "sometimes fall sick, and sometimes die, without any harm outwardly enforced." A conclusive "argument," adds our authority that, "the disease of the gentleman or gentle-

woman or owner whatsoever, entereth into the dog by the operation of heat intermingled and infected." The reader will agree with Caius to this extent at least, that "a dog sometimes falls sick and sometimes dies," it being in the nature of "dawgs" to fall into this uncomfortable habit.

Thus gravely wrote Dr. Caius, linguist, physician, naturalist, and antiquary, founder of the Cambridge College which bears his name, a great and learned Greek and Latin scholar, among whose numerous works we find translations from Galen and Hippocrates, a corrected edition of Celsus, and so on. The possibility of his being contradicted never once entered his mind; to prove that he was wrong was indeed, altogether impracticable. That "the disease of the gentleman, gentlewoman or owner," for Caius is conscientious even in these small matters, *had* "entered into the dog by the operation of heat intermingled and infected," is proved by the fact

that the dog died. *Q.E.D.* What more could possibly be advanced on the subject?

Physic, as a rule, was nasty; *ergo*, everything that was nasty, not known to be of a poisonous nature, was endowed, according to the logic of these professors, with medical or remedial qualities. Disgusting and absurd remedies were prescribed, apparently for no other reason than that they were nasty. If there were "doctors and doctors," there were, on the other hand, "patients and patients," like Montaigne, for instance, who wrote with undisguised contempt of certain medical preparations, the character of which was their abominable nastiness. Patients with more common sense than money discarded the man of science for the old lady, her cleanly and inexpensive simples:—

"And then a good old woman  
(Yes, faith, she dwells in Sea-coal Lane) did cure me,  
With *sodden ale*, and *pellitory o' the wall*,\*  
Cost me but two pence."†

\* Chamomile—probably made into "tea."

† Ben Jonson, *Alchemist* (1610), Act iii., sc. 4.

If the patient, in spite of the dreadful compositions which were being poured into him, got well, it was due to the unsupported efforts of nature, or rather, she brought him round in the teeth of the doctor himself. If the patient believed in his physician, Nature was more than magnanimous, because the belief, however absurd, gave her an enormous "vantage" ground. The learned man was well aware of the power of faith in matters of a remedial character. One of them, in 1632, counting evidently on the credulity of moneyed patients, took out a string of useless patents for so-called remedies, one being described as "a movable hydraulic, like a cabinet, which, being placed in a room or by a bed-side, causeth sweet sleep to those, who, by hot fevers or otherwise, cannot take rest. It alters also the dry, hot air into a moistening and cooling temper either with musical sounds or without." A sort of barrel-organ, combining, it would appear, the somnolent and remedial pro-



perties of the "Old Hundredth," with certain cooling influences, usually conspicuous by their absence when that antique and sober melody is in full drone.

Although some of its professors might not be alive to the importance of leaving Nature to do her own work, surgery was not in *this* debased condition. That they knew, nevertheless, that Nature could do something with a little assistance, seems evidenced by a hint which the surgeons had already taken from her in the art of engrafting noses upon faces which had been deprived of those useful and ornamental appendages. The learned Gaspar Taliacotius (more properly Talia-cocci), Professor of Physic and Surgery at Bologna [1553—1599], is, we believe, usually credited with this useful invention, although the operation seems to date as far back as 1442. The material for their construction was popularly believed to be taken from the rear-most part of the animal economy

of a penniless martyr hired, of course, for the purpose. It was seriously believed by the populace, at least, that so strong was the sympathy between the graft and the parent stock, that when the martyr died in the course of nature, the nose fell with him, a pleasant catastrophe for the wearer to contemplate, which Butler has amusingly chronicled in his *Hudibras*, with an unusual freedom of imagery which prevents our transcribing it by way of illustration.\*

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The eighteenth century opened with a well-established system of copious and everlasting bleeding. By this time the doctors had grown so wise that they found themselves in a position to correct Dame Nature herself. Nature, it was plain, for some purpose which, if not malign was uncontestably idiotic, had supplied the human system with too much blood. Their patients, meanwhile,

\* See *Hudibras*, Part I., c. 1. l. 281, etc.

were over-charging their veins with tremendous daily gorges of port wine, to say nothing of extra libations of full-bodied claret, with heating supplies of rum or brandy-punch, perfectly *ad libitum*. Our ancestors of the eighteenth century, in fact, ate and drank more like swine than human beings, and long before they had attained the age of forty set up paunches, the like of which are never seen nowadays, and which made them a subject of laughter for gods and men. Bleeding was necessary to preserve these folks from apoplexy, and a man of the last century resorted as regularly to his surgeon as his modern successor pays a monthly visit to his hairdresser.

Persons were elegantly told by advertisement in the papers of 1701 that, "at the Hummums in Covent Garden," they "might sweat in the cleanest, and be cupped after the newest, manner." The charge without the cupping was very high, even in those days—five shillings and sixpence. The

Hummums, apparently a corruption of "Hammams," was simply the Turkish bath of the present day under its then name. Here treatment by "bleeding, and hot water" was carried out with a conscientious integrity which might have satisfied the requirements of Dr. Philippe Hecquet, of Abbeville and Paris, said (on what authority we know not) to be the original of Le Sage's *Sangrado*. In the nineteenth century we have retained the bath, but happily discarded the "cupper" attendant, under the impression that the blood being "the life," his services are no longer desirable or necessary. With him the port wine and the paunches, the punch and the full-bodied claret, have likewise taken their departure; and this very year the old house and its neighbour, long known as the "Old" and "New Hummums," have likewise disappeared before the march of modern improvement.

The doctors, however, did not confine their bleeding operations to the full-bodied and the strong.

"Impartiality" was the maxim, regardless of the diet, the mode of living, the temperament, or the constitution of the patient. Stout and lean, long and short, sound or cripple—all fared alike; the universal cry (in the choice and euphonious language of the time) was, "Come and be blooded." They did everything heroically in those days—nothing by halves. Thomas Dover, who wrote himself "M.B.," and of whose heroic practice and its terrible consequences we shall have to say something in our next chapter, describes the method by which he treated consumption in 1733. "One Mr. William Masters, an eminent surgeon at Evesham, in Worcestershire, was so far gone in a consumption that he was not able to stand alone. I advised him by all means to lose *six ounces* of blood *every day* for a fortnight, *if he lived so long*; then every other day, then every third day and fifth day for the same time. This was in the month of November. The March following," we are told,

"he rode from Evesham to Bristol in one day, which is forty-seven long miles, to give me thanks for his recovery. He lived many years after. His relations all died in consumption. This," adds the reckless empiric, "was the first experiment I made of bleeding by the same method:" we may be quite certain that it was by no means the last.

Everywhere, and as it would appear, in every land, almost justifying the bitter satire levelled against the faculty by Jonathan Swift in 1726, regardless of sex, age, strength, and condition, the same bad, reckless, senseless work was going on. We close this chapter with a melancholy case, full details of which will be found in the memoirs of Louis de Rouvroy, Duc de St. Simon. Madame la Duchesse de Berri, daughter of the Regent. d'Orleans, lay a-dying—not of disease, but of exhaustion, consequent on the hideous course of bleeding and purgatives to which the interesting patient had been subjected. The Duke and Duchess were

in despair; all the medical knowledge and skill which Paris could afford had been tried in vain. If, instead of adopting this course, they had turned every one of the rascally empirics into the Bastille, the probability almost amounts to a certainty that the patient would have recovered. Some one at length seems to have bethought him of a certain Doctor Garus, known as the inventor of an "elixir," the virtues of which were said to be marvellous. Garus was sent for; took in the patient, but more especially her medical surroundings, at a glance; and declined to undertake any responsibility. Pressed to give his assistance, and assured by the Duke that he would be held free from all consequences, he consented to undertake the case on two conditions only: First, that no one should be permitted to interfere with his treatment; secondly, and above all, that nothing should be administered to the patient without his knowledge and consent. The effect of the "elixir"—a powerful restorative

tonic—was marvellous, and the sufferer began from that time rapidly to mend. The second act in the drama opened with a terrible scene. Chirac, head quack and court physician, beside himself with rage and mortification, stole in one night while Garus, tired of watching, lay sleeping on the sofa, awoke the sufferer, and, in the presence of the two nurses, who did not venture to oppose him, administered one of his hideous purgatives. The result was almost instantaneous, and from that moment the unfortunate duchess relapsed. To say that Garus was furious would give no idea of his sensations. He said that the conditions of his retainer had been broken. Not only had his treatment been interfered with, but a drastic purgative had been administered which, in the then enfeebled condition of his patient, was nothing less than an irritant poison. It was useless for the idiot Chirac to deny what he had done, for there were the two nurses to testify against him. The poor Duchess



sank so rapidly and continuously that she died the following night.

Those were the old Bastille days. Only a few years before, Dubourg had perished in his iron cage in the monastery prison of Mont St. Michel, to which he had been confined for three and twenty years for a libel he had written on Louis XIV. of France. The wonder is that the murderer—for such he was—was not consigned to a fate which he most richly merited. The fellow was not only a criminal, but an impudent and unfeeling quack; for he brazened it out with Garus, and attempted even to justify what he had done. That he did not lose his head, his liberty, or his favour, is shown by the fact that we find this same charlatan in attendance, and busy with his lancet when the Regent himself fell dead in the apoplectic seizure which terminated a long course of orgies and heavy suppers. We cannot help sympathising with Garus. The idea of combating disease with-

out the aid of the lancet, the blister, or the purge, was so novel in those days, that it commended itself to every one. Louis XV. purchased the secret of the "elixir," we doubt not, at a price which amply compensated the inventor.

## CHAPTER IV.

### SOME MORE OLD PATIENTS.

THE period which marks the first third of the eighteenth century—that is to say, about the year 1732-3—is memorable for the appearance of what we will venture to term, the “crude-mercury” *mania*. We have have seen something of medical manias in our own time, but in our own time, when knowledge is so largely increased, they have been, for the most part, of a comparatively harmless character, and have been, for the most part, confined to people of mild and harmless tendencies. Such was the charcoal mania, more pleasant, perhaps, than the “Tar-water” mania of Bishop Berkeley, of a hundred and forty years ago, in-

finitely more sensible and agreeable than the "brandy and salt" mania of a still later date. There have been, it is true, the hydrate of chloral mania, and other manias of a still more objectionable character; but their danger has been promptly exposed to those whose minds are open to conviction by the accomplished faculty of our day. "Crude" means unprepared; and crude mercury, therefore, simply indicates the mineral in its liquid state. So long as mercury retains its liquid form it is inert, and may do no harm, though what *good* it would accomplish it might be difficult to say.

One of the persons primarily instrumental in writing up the assumed virtues of "crude" mercury was our old friend Thomas Dover, M.B., which may stand either for Bachelor of Medicine, or "Medical Bungler," whichever the reader may prefer. The man, whether "M.B." or otherwise, was nothing better than an ignorant and dangerous

empiric. He had written a work entitled "The Ancient Physician's Legacy to his Country," which passed through many editions, the fourth being published in 1733. In this edition the writer incorporated, he tells us, "a great number of letters sent from several parts of England of the extraordinary cures perform'd by crude mercury." The book led to a vigorous controversy, in which several honest and intelligent professional men endeavoured to expose the danger (as they expressed it) of taking the mineral in this reckless fashion\* by reference to cases. The book, however, created a perfect *furor* for swallowing "crude mercury." "Crude mercury" was proclaimed to be a sovereign and absolutely harmless remedy for all kinds of diseases. It was by no means an uncommon practice for persons to swallow (apparently on

\* One of these (by Dr. Turner) is entitled, "The Ancient Physican's Legacy Survey'd; and his practice prov'd repugnant . . . to the very diseases of which he undertakes to give us an account."

their own responsibility) an ounce of "crude mercury" twice a day, for six weeks or two months together, under the impression that the mineral was a sovereign remedy for indigestion and other discomforts. One person, dating his letter from "the Navy Office," on the 12th May, 1733, writes that, after subjecting himself to a course such as we have described, he found himself transformed from the condition of a confirmed dyspeptic into what he calls "a pretty good state of health," which only shows what imagination will do for persons suffering from actual disease, or from diseases more or less imaginary.

Barton Booth was at this time one of the finest actors of his day,—as great in his way as Garrick, who made his first appearance eight years after Booth's death. His masterpiece is said to have been *Othello*. He was a relation of the Earl of Warrington, a scholar, a man of poetical taste, and the intimate friend and *protégé* of Lord Boling-

broke. He had acquired a liking for the stage when acting in a play of *Terence* at Westminster School, where he had been the favourite of the eccentric Busby. When Addison's *Cato* was produced the hero was first offered to Colley Cibber, who refused it; it was then proposed to Mills, who, however, declined it, on the plea that it was too old a character for him; it was then tendered to Barton Booth, who was pronounced so eminently successful in the representation, that he found himself elevated to the position of a star of the first magnitude. Pope's reference to his success is, as usual, satirical:—

Booth enters : hark ! the universal peal !

But has he spoken ? Not a syllable.

What shook the stage, and made the people stare ?

*Cato's* long wig, flow'r'd gown, and lacquer'd chair."

With all his intellectual tastes (if not actual gifts) and histrionic abilities, Booth, perhaps not unnaturally, considering his surroundings and the peculiar temptations to which he was exposed, fell

into the swinish habits of his day. Taking warning (according to Dibdin) from the example of Powell, or deferring (according to Chetwood) to the wishes of his young wife, Miss Santlow, he abandoned, to a great extent, his drinking propensities, but substituted in their place a habit scarcely less objectionable—that of gluttony, to such an extent that, as Chetwood says, “I have often known Mrs. Booth, out of extreme tenderness to him, order the [good things of the] table to be removed for fear of overcharging his stomach.” The natural result of such habits followed in due course, and at forty years of age Barton Booth was already an old man. For many years prior to 1733 he had suffered under what was then described as “an obstinate jaundice,” for which he had ineffectually followed “many courses of medicine, and had, by the advice of his physician, been salivated for the space of a month at a time.” Each day during the two years which preceded



his fatal illness he had been in the habit of chewing at least *three drams* of rhubarb, doubtless, under medical advice. How *Othello* came to be considered a satisfactory performance, how the actor had any strength of body or mind left for an intellectual effort of this kind, we fail to understand. We are told, however, by the authority from which we gather our information, that he was not in "any ways dispirited," and that "the jaundice not only entirely vanish'd, but he recover'd his strength and flesh, growing fat, and remaining in this hopeful way till about a month before he died; then he relapsed," we are informed, "into his jaundice, attended with an intermitting fever."

As ill luck would have it, Dover's book was brought to Booth's notice, and being by this time a confirmed medicine-taker, he resolved to put himself under the care of this empiric; this was on the 3rd May, 1733. The "doctor" assured

him that crude mercury "would not only prevent the return of his fever, but effectually cure him of all his complaints," and this it most certainly did.

"On the day following," which would be the 4th May, "he began the mercurial course as directed;" and by Tuesday, the 8th of May (that is to say, within four days' time), "he had taken, within two ounces, two pounds' weight of crude mercury. He now began to complain of very great pain and general uneasiness, and the extent of the pain and uneasiness under which he suffered may be imagined from the fact that "he could not remain one moment in the same posture." This continued till the next day, the victim still hoping "his mercurial course would answer the promised effects." His wife, however, being blessed with a fund of common sense which had been denied to her more intellectual husband, now sent for Sir Hans Sloane, who, to relieve the head,

"order'd nine ounces of blood to be drawn from the jugular" vein, with other remedies. In the evening "a cordial mixture" was administered—probably "Sir Walter Raleigh's Cordial," a nostrum much patronised by the doctors of that day. The next day (the 10th), "the headache still continuing, an *epispastick* was laid all over the scalp," and an emulsion prescribed "to obviate a stranguary." These and other remedies were applied without effect, and in the evening Barton Booth was dead.

The body was opened by Mr. Alexander Small, a surgeon of repute at this time, in the presence of Sir Hans Sloane. We give, of course, only a portion of the result as stated by the former gentleman. "The whole tract in the inside [was found to be] lined with crude mercury, divided in globules about the bigness of pins' heads. The inside of the intestines . . . were as black as your hat," and in such a condition "that they would not endure the least straining without breaking in pieces."

It is for medical men, of course, to say how far "crude mercury" was responsible for this state of things. The opponents of the practice, which was absurd if it was not highly reprehensible, pointed out the effects which mercury produced in a very short time upon the workers in the mines, and argued from this premiss how much more prejudicial it must be to swallow the mineral in its crude form. In this, however, they displayed their ignorance of the physiological effects of metallic mercury. They confounded the injurious effects of *mercurial vapours*, when inhaled or brought in contact with the body, with the generally innocuous properties of liquid mercury itself. These effects have been long known. They are observed in water-gilders, looking-glass silverers, barometer makers, men employed in quicksilver mines, and in others exposed to *mercurial emanations*. They bring on affections of the nervous system, indicated by shaking palsy, vertigo, loss of memory, and other

cerebral disorders, which often terminate (if the person affected persevere with his business) in delirium, epilepsy or apoplexy, and death. A curious instance occurred many years ago, in the case of the *Triumph* man-of-war and the schooner *Phipps*, which received on board several tons of quicksilver which had been saved from a wreck. The mercury escaped in consequence of the rotting of the bags, and the whole of the crew suffered more or less severely for the space of three weeks. Two hundred men were salivated, two died, and all the animals were destroyed. The metal itself, however, is pronounced by Dr. Christison to be innocuous.

Whether the mania for swallowing metallic mercury was abated in consequence of the fate of Barton Booth, which was attributed to its administration, may be open to question. In the *London Evening Post* of the 11th March, 1735, we find the following advertisement, inserted by a prac-

tioner, who apparently believed in the efficacy of only three remedies: iron, fire, and "crude" mercury:—

"THIS day is publish'd, by Tho. Harris of Hackney, Surgeon, a treatise on the force and energy of *crude* mercury; proving the usefulness and innocency of its internal application by a great variety of experiments and histories of cases acute and chronic. Quod non sanat medicamentum, *Ferrum sanat*; Quod Ferrum non sanat, *Ignis sanat*; Quod Ignis non sanat, *Mercurius sanat*; Quod non sanat mercurius; *insanabile est*. (Printed for E. Symon, over against the Royal Exchange in Cornhill.)"

We concluded our last chapter with a death-bed scene at the court of the Regent d'Orleans of France, and we shall now take you to another in one of our own royal palaces. The distinguished victim in this case was Queen Caroline, consort of George II., a woman of refined and delicate sensibilities, a striking contrast in every respect to the mean, selfish, uninteresting, unkingly personage, her husband. We derive our materials for the story from Lord John Hervey's "Memoirs;" and it is fair to say that, although the case exhibits in

a melancholy light the singular incapacity of the doctors and surgeons who attended her, she was in no small degree the victim of her own inexplicable reticence. For upwards of fourteen years she had suffered from a malady, the existence of which she had carefully concealed from her medical advisers, although it appears to have been known to her husband, and to one of the ladies of the court, who happened at this time to be unfortunately absent. On the morning of the 8th of November, 1737, she was taken ill at her library in St. James's Park, of what was then supposed to be "acholic." On her return to the palace she took a dose of Daffy's Elixir, under the direction of George Lewis Tessier, F.R.S., a German, and physician to the household. She continued, however, to be in such pain, "and so uneasy with frequent reachings to vomit," that she went to bed. She had sufficient nerve and strength of will, however, to rise, and be present at the drawing-room,

and to remain during the whole of its weary progress. The king having discussed the *Dragon of Wantley*, a stupid farce which occupied fashionable attention at this period, and exhausted such other topics of conversation of which his sluggish mind was capable, at length withdrew, reminding the queen, as he passed, that she had overlooked the Duchess of Norfolk. To the duchess (the last person she ever spoke to in public) Her Majesty now made her apologies, and returned immediately to bed, which she never again quitted in life.

With the sanction of the King, Dr. Noel Broxholme, first physician to Frederick, Prince of Wales, was now sent for, and the two physicians agreed to give the Queen some snake-root, and to administer a nostrum fashionable since the time of James I., then and now known under the name of "Sir Walter Raleigh's cordial." The cordial took long to prepare, and meanwhile, a more sensible fellow named Ranby, house-surgeon to the King,



objected to a cordial, no matter what its name might be, on the principle that it was quackery, not medicine, "and no better than any other spirit." Lord Hervey, therefore, caused some usquebaugh to be given to the Queen, who, however, failed to retain it. Soon after came the snake-root and cordial from the apothecary's, and these in like manner were taken and rejected. The doctors had now administered in succession Daffy's Elixir (twice), mint-water, usquebaugh, snake-root, and Sir Walter Raleigh's Cordial, but these, instead of relieving the Queen, greatly aggravated the fever which oppressed her. By way of curing the blunders which had already been committed, the doctors now had resort to the usual panacea of those days, and Ranby was ordered to bleed her twelve ounces immediately."

The case is curious, if for no other reason, as illustrating the course of remedies which were sanctioned by the shining lights of physic in the

first third of the last century. It may be mentioned, by way of parenthesis, in this place, that all this summer the Princess Caroline had suffered from severe rheumatic pains. "Ward's Pill," one of the nostrums of the notorious quack Joshua Ward, had done, it was admitted, wonders for her; but, being of a delicate constitution, the King and Queen were anxious that she should retire to rest, which she refused to do till two o'clock in the morning. The stupid, lumbering King, under the impression possibly that he might be of use (which he never was at that or at any other period of his life), persisted in lying on Her Majesty's bed "in his nightgown," greatly, of course, to his own inconvenience which was of small consequence, but to the dreadful inconvenience of the sufferer, who was thereby prevented from obtaining any relief by altering her position.

Early in the morning of Thursday, the 10th of November, "the Queen was again blooded twelve

ounces." The fever had abated; the sickness, too, was suspended for a few hours at least; but the real cause of the mischief appears to have been never once suspected. That evening, while the Princess Caroline and Lord John Hervey were alone with the Queen, she dropped some mysterious hints in the midst of her suffering. "I have," she said, "an ill which nobody knows of." This was understood simply to mean that her sufferings were greater than she could express, or than any one could imagine. It meant a great deal more than this, as Nature had already done her best to make the physicians understand, and in vain.

That night two more physicians were called in, Sir Hans Sloane and Dr. Edward Hulse, and then the Sangrado treatment—blistering and aperients—was renewed; the latter returned, like everything else, soon after they were taken. At six o'clock on the morning of the 11th "the Queen was again blooded." The fever had almost en-

tirely left her; but, although the unmistakable and dangerous symptoms continued unabated, the physicians, strange to say, remained completely in the dark as to the real cause of the mischief. Next morning, the King's sluggish mind travelled back, for the first time, to certain disclosures which had been made to him years before. Whether he received a hint from Ranby, or whether Ranby had any real inkling of what was the matter, we do not know; it is probable that up to this time he was acting under the directions of the four physicians. Nature was expressing herself after her own fashion in terms which (as it seems to us) no skilled professional man could well have mistaken, but had addressed herself to the physicians in vain. It would appear that the King communicated his suspicions first to Ranby, and by this means the source of the mischief was for the first time discovered. Paul Bussière, a distinguished French refugee surgeon, was now

sent for, but not being at home, Ranby brought back with him a city surgeon named Skipton, "one of the most eminent and able," we are told, "of the whole profession." By this time, too, Bussière had arrived, and the three professional men remained in constant attendance. That evening—all too late—a painful operation was performed, without, however, any material result, and without giving the surgeons much hope of the patient's recovery.

A curious vacillation now became noticeable in the opinions of the surgeons. On the morning of the 13th they stated that the wound had already begun to mortify; five hours later, however, they reported that "the mortification was not spread," and even expressed an opinion that the Queen might yet recover. Lord Hervey's remarks on this remarkable change of opinion appear worthy of transcription. "It appeared," he tells us, "so inconsistent with their declaration some hours before,

*and in my opinion showed so much ignorance, that if a life of this consequence, committed to the care of four of the best physicians and three of the best surgeons in England, received no better assistance from their skill, how natural it is to deplore the situation of those whose safety depends on the sagacity of these professions, and how reasonable to despise those who put their trust in such aids! Not that I am so unjust," he adds, "to surgery as to put that science upon the same footing with physic."* As, however, he concludes his remarks with severe animadversions on the conduct of the surgeons, and plainly expresses his opinion that they were blundering and incompetent, the inference is that, although surgery stood, in his estimation, immeasurably superior to the science of physic, he had small opinion of the skill of these particular operators.

"Monday and Tuesday (the 14th and 15th of November, 1737) the Queen was what the doctors,

surgeons, and courtiers called better ;" the wound had assumed no threatening symptoms ; the sickness had much subsided ; " but those who had judged by essential circumstances, and not on the hourly variation of trifles, whatever they might say from fashion or to please, could not in reality believe the Queen's condition more hopeful or less dangerous." As for the Queen herself, it is plain, from the account given us by Lord John Hervey, that she had never entertained any hopes of her recovery. Details of the sufferings to which the royal patient was subjected are inadmissible here. Lord Hervey, it is true, is as conscientious in his particulars as any surgeon might wish to be, but there is no necessity for reproducing any such descriptions here. The one thing which strikes us in reading the account is the marvellous patience and resignation of the sufferer. On the evening of Sunday, the 20th of November, she had inquired of Tessier how long it was possible her sufferings

would continue; to which the politic doctor made answer, "*Je crois que votre Majesté sera bientôt soulagée.*" "Tant mieux," she had calmly replied. The German, for once in his life, was right, for the end came that night.

What a dismal revelation of blundering and incapacity! What an *exposé* of the state of medical science in England in 1737! Well might Lord Hervey decline to be "so unjust as to put the science of surgery upon the same footing with physic." Only imagine *hernia* treated by "four of the best physicians" in the land with blisters and the lancet, with Daffy's Elixir, mint-water, usquebaugh, snake-root, and Sir Walter Raleigh's Cordial! The College of Physicians might hold up a warning finger against Joshua Ward's "drop and pill;" and yet it seems to us that Joshua Ward, ex-footman, now drysalter, empiric, and quack as he was, might hold his own with the very best of them.



Nor was Queen Caroline the only royal victim. Fourteen years later on, Frederick, Prince of Wales (father of George III.), was sacrificed to the ignorance and incapacity of his medical advisers. He had caught cold in the month of March 1751: very little apprehensions were at first entertained; indeed, hardly an hour before his death he had asked to see some friends, and had called for coffee and bread-and-butter. A fit of coughing came on, in the midst of which he died from suffocation eleven days after his first attack. His physicians, Wilmot and Lee, were shamefully in the dark as to the nature of his malady. They seem simply to have relied on the state of his pulse, which they declared, half an hour before his death, was equal to that of a man in perfect health, but took no note of the bursting of an abscess which had been forming in his side, nor of the "black thrush which appeared in his mouth and quite down into his throat." Every one but

themselves saw the incapacity of these men. Lord Melcombe, writing at the time, says truly, that "their ignorance or their knowledge of his disorder (whichever it might be) rendered them equally inexcusable for not calling in other assistance."

"Let me, moreover, own to thee," says the villain Lovelace, writing to his friend "John Belford, Esq.," in the style of a young man of fashion of the period, "let me, moreover, own to thee that Dr. Hale, who was my good Astolfo (you read Ariosto, Jack), and has brought me back my wit-jar, had much ado, by starving diet, by profuse phlebotomy, and by flaying blisters, eyelet-hole cupping, a dark room, a midnight solitude in a mid-day sun, to effect my recovery. And now, for my comfort, he tells me that I may still have returns upon *full moons*—horrible! most horrible!—and must be as careful of myself at both equinoctials as Cæsar was warned to be of the ides of March."

Bleeding was the special refuge of the faculty from any influence which tended to create fulness or undue excitement. The main principle, in fact, of the Sangrado doctrine seems to have been that the patient must be lowered under all and every circumstance of disturbance. During the excitement which prevailed at the time of the drawing of the prizes at the lotteries at Guildhall, poor medical practitioners made it their business to attend, to be ready to "let blood" in cases where the sudden announcement of the fate of tickets had (as was frequently the case) an overpowering effect upon the holders. The universal practice led to the coining of a word which has happily passed out of our vocabulary. People were not bled, they were "blooded." The sanguinary word was in every one's mouth; it was the universal expression. "On Tuesday," says Miss Burney, in her *Diary and Letters for 1779*, "I was quite ill, and obliged to be *blooded*,—so I could not go down

to dinner." People were "blooded" before they went on one of the long stage-coach journeys described by Tobias Smollett; before they made their wills; before they did anything, in fact which was out of the course of their usual practice and their usual experience. In the old drinking days, indeed, when men turned themselves into port-wine barrels, and coloured their noses, just as young men of the last generation coloured their meerschaums, we have already seen that bleeding was oftentimes next door to a necessity. The men with the huge paunches and the red noses, who figure in the caricatures of Gilray and Rowlandson, may have been, so far as their features were concerned, exaggerations, but their paunches, their red noses, their fat double chins, their elephantine limbs, were drawn from the life, by the artists who have preserved to us their unpleasing peculiarities. These men were always more or less on the verge of apoplexy, and it was bleeding that not only

relieved but frequently saved them. The doctors, although they preached abstention, were not one whit more abstemious than their patients. Radcliffe, in 1703, had an attack of pleurisy, which, owing to his own imprudence, all but cost him his life. Even during the attack he could not be induced to abandon the everlasting bottle; and Bernard, the sergeant-surgeon, being called in, bled him to the extent of one hundred ounces (six pounds' weight of blood!), and by this means checked the disease.

Even so late as forty years ago, when the practice of venesection had practically gone out, the faculty placed great reliance upon leeches. Charles James Lever, who commenced life and for some years practised as a medical man, invariably fled for relief, so far as he was personally concerned, to the Sangrado treatment. Writing to his publisher on one occasion, he told him that neglect to answer his letters "would cost him a

pint of colchicum, and a rivulet full of gorged leeches." "Copious bleeding," however, says his biographer, "reduced the man rather than the local ills which teased him. That he should have bowed to the barbarous system of the day amazes us. The faculty, wiser now, regard the blood as the life. Their statistics show that up to the year 1839 1,000,000 leeches were supplied yearly to the Parisian hospitals, while during the last twelve years the annual supply has been only 50,000."

It seems to us appropriate to close our references to the old "bleeding" days with a good story from Boileau. A French physician, named Bernard, one day found an old Abbé, a stranger to him, playing at cards with one of his patients. He had no sooner seen him than he exclaimed with much vehemence, "What do you here? Go home, get bled immediately! You have not one minute

\* Fitzpatrick's "Life of Charles Lever," i., 280.

to lose!" The Abbé remained motionless in great alarm. He was conveyed home. M. Bernard bled him in the usual unstinting fashion, three or four times, drenched him, of course, with drastic drugs, but found him not one whit the better. On the third day, everything having been done that medical science could devise, and everything having failed, the sick man's brother was sent for from the country. He arrived in haste, and was informed that the Abbé was dying. "Of what disease?" he inquired. M. Bernard assured him that, without being at all aware of it, his brother had been seized with a violent fit of apoplexy; that he had fortunately discovered it by seeing his mouth drawn awry; and had treated him accordingly. "Why, sir," quietly replied the martyr's brother, "his mouth has been awry these sixty years."

The improvement in medical and surgical knowledge from 1741 only up to 1839 is conclusively shown by the following figures:—The proportion

of deaths to cures in St. Bartholomew's and St Thomas's Hospitals in 1741 was one in ten; during 1780 the mortality had diminished to one in fourteen; during 1813, to one in sixteen; while in 1827, out of 12,494 patients, 259 only died, *or one in forty-eight*. The improvement of course has been steadily maintained. The power of the small-pox, which at one time swept off one-half of our population, has been practically annihilated, a fact to which the stupid folks who seek to evade the beneficent provisions of the law which has produced the result, prefer to remain wilfully ignorant. Typhus fever, which at one time was accustomed to visit this country in annual epidemics, and to slay one out of every three whom it attacked, is now seldom seen as an epidemic, and its average mortality in 1839 did not amount to one in sixteen. Measles, scarlet fever, whooping-cough, are no longer regarded with the terror they once inspired. According to the author of "Physic and



Physicians," from 1799 to 1808 the mortality of consumption amounted to about 27 per cent. of those who became ill; from 1808 to 1813 it diminished to 23 per cent.; and from 1813 to 1822 it still further decreased to 22 per cent. For these results, and the position to which the science of medicine and its professors occupy at the present time, it seems to us that we are in no small degree indebted to the noble army who have fallen victims to the bungling practitioners of former days.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE RED CROSS ON THE DOOR.

THOMAS STEVENS, the Jesuit, who is said to have been the first Englishman known to have reached India by the Cape of Good Hope, gives us, in 1579, an account of the trials which awaited the mariners of the days of Elizabeth. "You shall understand," he tells us, "that, the Cape passed, there be two ways to India: one within the Isle of St. Lawrence,\* which they take willingly, because they refresh themselves at Mozambique\* a fortnight or a month, not without great need; and thence, in a month more, land at Goa. The other is without the Isle of St. Lawrence, which they take when

\* Madagascar.

they set forth so late, and come so late to the Point that they have no time to take the foresaid Mozambique; and then they go heavily [*i.e.*, sadly], because in this way they take no port, and by reason of the long navigation and want of food and water, they fall into sundry diseases: their gums wax great and swell, and they are fain to cut them away; their legs swell, and all the body becometh sore and so benumbed that they cannot stir hand nor foot, and so they die for weakness; others fall into fluxes [dysentery] and agues and die thereby." The disease which Thomas Stevens here refers to is the scurvy, which, playing havoc with our sailors for centuries, has passed, owing to our knowledge of the method of guarding against it by judicious diet, into a comparatively unknown disorder.

The *calenture* (*calentura*, from *caleo*, I burn) was a form of frenzy which attacked Drake's sailors in his expedition to the West Indies in 1585. If

we remember rightly, that excellent scholar and writer, Charles Kingsley, has made it the subject of one of the most pathetic incidents in his admirable story of "Westward Ho!" In the burning fever of the *calentura* the sailors of Elizabeth fancied in their delirium that the sea was the green fields of their native land, and would plunge into it if not restrained. Thus Swift:—

"So, by a *calenture* misled,  
The mariner with rapture sees,  
On the smooth ocean's azure bed,  
Enamell'd fields, and verdant trees;  
With eager haste he longs to rove  
In that fantastic scene, and thinks  
It must be some enchanted grove;  
And in he leaps, and down he sinks."

Of those that survived an attack of the *calentura* few ever regained their strength; they lost their memory, and gradually lapsed into idiocy. The writers of the time describe it as "a very burning and pestilent ague," i.e., fever. The suddenness

of its operation is referred to by Philip Massinger in the *Fatal Dowry*:—

“Thou dost strike  
A deathful coldness to my heart's high heat,  
And shrink my liver, like the *calenture*.”

References (but we think not many) will be found to it in other works such as Bishop (Joseph) Hall's Poems, “The London Prodigal,” Sir John Denham's works, etc.; but no such disease as the *calenture* appears to be known to modern medicine; it is an old enemy which has fled before the light of modern medical science.

England itself was a favourite preserve for King Death's victims in the old days, which may be said to have terminated with 1665. Why it was so—why the King of Terrors carried off so enormous a bag on the occasion of his frequent and periodical battues—is easily shown. Erasmus gives a graphic, if not too pleasant idea of the internal economy of English aristocratic mansions in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. A magnificent

apartment, a yearly pension of six hundred florins, and a benefice which produced nearly one hundred marks, offered him by Henry VIII. and Cardinal Wolsey, were not sufficient to counterbalance the disgust he felt at the incommodious and bad exposition of the houses, the filthiness of the streets, and the unspeakable nastiness of the indoor arrangements. "The floors," he says in his letters, "are commonly of clay, strewed with rushes, under which lie undisturbed an ancient collection of lees, grease, fragments, bones, spittle, excrements of dogs and cats, and everything that is nasty." If this was the condition of aristocratic and well-to-do people, we may imagine the condition of the very poor. To the sordid, uncleanly, swinish mode of life adopted by our predecessors, high and low, Erasmus was disposed to impute the frequent visits of plague and pestilence to our shores; and there can be no question but that he was right. Another reason for the dreadful mortality which

characterised these visitations was the close crowding of the people, the narrow lanes and thoroughfares, the absence, above all, of sanitary arrangements and regulations of the most primitive description. The Star Chamber was continually giving illegal force to royal proclamations which discouraged any increase in the buildings of London, pulling down erections and iniquitously confiscating the materials and property of the builders, discouraging the congregation of country gentlemen in the metropolis on the plea of overcrowding, when the Government, instead of illegally interfering with private rights, should have concerned itself in promoting legislation for the drainage, disinfection, and ventilation of streets and dwellings.

There is no necessity for our going very far back to ascertain the enormous number of victims which Death swept away when he had decided to gather in his periodical harvests; it will be

sufficient to commence our short review some three hundred years after the Norman Conquest. The putrid form of typhus, which received the name of the *Black Death*, because the bodies turned black with rapid putrefaction, made its appearance in 1348 (time of Edward III.), travelling to this country by way of Italy, and taking some eight years to complete its leisurely but thoroughly practical progress. In the course of little more (perhaps a little less) than twelve months it is said to have carried off 2,500,000 persons, in other words, half of the entire population of England. In London alone two hundred were buried daily in the Charterhouse yard. Thirteen years later on, in the same reign (1361-2,) again in 1367, and yet again in 1369, a dreadful mortality prevailed in London and Paris. In the year 1407 (reign of Henry IV.) 30,000 persons perished of pestilence in London. In 1478 (reign of Edward IV.) a plague raged which destroyed more people than the continual



wars which had prevailed during the fifteen preceding years. In 1485 the curious and awful disease then known as the *Sudor Anglicus*, or "sweating sickness," made its first appearance. It broke out among the foreign levies of the army of the Earl of Richmond upon his landing at Milford Haven, and spread to London, where it raged from the beginning of August till the end of October. In 1499—1500 the plague prevailed so dreadfully in London that Henry VII. and his Court removed to Calais. The "swcating sickness" paid its second visit to us in 1506, and its third in 1517. In most of the capital towns, half of the inhabitants died of it, whilst Oxford was (so to speak) depopulated. It paid its fourth visit in 1528, and its fifth and last in 1551. In 1603-4, 30,578 persons died of the plague in London alone, and a still larger number in 1625. Our long list of Death's visitations to this country practically terminates with the "great plague" of 1664-5.

The "sweating sickness" was most prompt in its malignancy and fatal in its action. It killed in one or two hours; never taking more than twenty-four to accomplish its deadly work. Our friend Caius describes it and its treatment which, so far as we are able to judge, was a fairly sensible one, the patient being strictly guarded against taking cold, and the perspiration promoted instead of being checked. Caius puts the cause down to "evil diet" rather than the right one, and founds his erroneous opinion upon the fact that, "those who had the disease, sore with peril or death, were either men of wealth, ease, and welfare, or of the poorer sort, such as were idle persons, good ale drinkers, and tavern haunters—the laborious and thin-dieted," he says, "escaped." In 1529, and then only, it infested the Netherlands and Germany. In the latter country it interrupted a conference at Marpurg, between Luther and Zwinglius. The two sons of Charles Brandon, both Dukes of Sussex,

were carried off by it, when it paid its fifth and last visit in 1551.

The fact that the putrid typhus, or "Black Death," never appeared again, is simply an evidence of the beneficial effect of some sort of attention to drainage and sanitary arrangement; but the "Black Death" is not dead as is generally supposed. An unknown and incurable disease, which was named the *Black Death* on account of purple blotches coming out on the skin, made its appearance in Dublin in March and some succeeding months of 1866, and many persons of all ranks died a few hours after the seizure. This was the "Black Death" of the fourteenth century, and it is at this moment doing deadly work among the miners in certain parts of the principality.

Defoe was a child of three years old when the "Great Plague" broke out in London in 1664, and derived the materials for his so-called "Journal" from the recollections of his father, James Foe, and

his friends, supplemented probably by Dr. Hodges's *Loimologia*, published originally in Latin in 1666, and in English in 1720 and 1721 respectively. We shall not of course enter into details which he has so admirably and ably described, but shall illustrate one or two of his observations from materials we have gathered from persons who passed through the horrors of the visitation, and which may possibly be unknown to the great majority of our readers.

While speaking of the quacks who at first made a harvest out of the terrors of the people, he gives us the names of some of the leading physicians of that time. "There is no doubt," he says, "but these quacking set of fellows raised great gains out of the miserable people; for we daily found the crowds that ran after them were infinitely greater, and their doors were more thronged than those of Dr. Brooks, Dr. Upton, Dr. Hodges, Dr. Berwick, or any, though the most famous men of the time. And I was told that some of them got five pound

a day by their physic." Further on, he refers to the manner in which some of the physicians deserted their posts in a spirit of sheer terror and cowardice, contrasting their conduct with those who fell victims to their exemplary courage. "It is true, when the infection came to such a height as I have now mentioned, there were very few physicians which car'd to stir abroad to sick houses, and very many of the most eminent of the faculty were dead as well as the surgeons also, for now it was indeed a dismal time; and for about a month together, not taking any notice of the Bills of Mortality, I believe there did not die less than 1,500 or 1,700 a day, one day with another." And again, towards the close of the narrative: "Great was the reproach thrown on those physicians who left their patients during the sickness, and now they came to Town again, nobody car'd to employ them; they were call'd Deserters, and frequently bills were set upon their doors, and written, 'Here,

is a Doctor to be let!’ so that several of these physicians were fain for a while to sit still and look about them, or at least remove their dwellings, and set up in new places, and among new acquaintance; *the like was the case with the clergy*, who the people were indeed very abusive to, writing verses and scandalous reflections upon them, setting upon the church door, ‘Here is a pulpit to be let,’ or sometimes ‘to be sold,’ which was worse.”

One of the London physicians of this period was the celebrated Thomas Sydenham, now in his forty-second year. Mr. Timbs, in his volumes of “*Ana*,” compares him favourably with his frightened brethren, and gravely tells us that *he* would not desert his post, no, not “for a single day; he was resolved,” says our authority, “to live or die in the performance of his duty. In a Latin work on the plague (his *Latinity*,” says Mr. Timbs, “is very fine, and he never writes without giving valu-

able information) he declares that, though necessarily visiting the sick, he was never ill. He took a few extra glasses of wine, kept his mind in a calm frame, prayed daily, and trusted in God!" Now, where Mr. Timbs got his information from we do not know, but, unfortunately, it is not true. The person who paid these constant visits, who wrote the Latin which delighted Mr. Timbs's mind, who drank even the "extra glasses of wine," was not Sydenham at all, but quite another physician. Unfortunately we are afraid for the cause of truth; Thomas Sydenham was one of those doctors who deserted their duties. He stood indeed the first shock of the pestilence, but was afterwards persuaded by his friends to accompany them into the country. He returned, however, and resumed his practice some weeks before the plague had entirely abated. Sydenham's name, it is noteworthy is not once mentioned by Daniel Defoe.

Now for the extra glasses of wine which no doubt Sydenham did drink (the gracefulness of his accomplishments as a Latin scholar we do not for one moment dispute). Writing in his assumed character of a journalist of the Plague year, Defoe tells us that he kept himself from infection by "a preparation of strong scent." "Neither did I do," he goes on to say, "what I know some did, keep the spirits always high and hot with cordials, and *wine and such things*, and which, as I observ'd, one learned physician used himself so much to, as that he could not leave them off when the infection was quite gone, and so became a sot for all his life after." We are afraid that the "learned physician" here referred to but not designated by name, was the learned Dr. Nathaniel Hodges.

One of the most courageous of the physicians, a constant attendant upon the infected throughout the visitation from its commencement to its close, was Nathaniel Hodges, M.D. The prophylactic of



Hodges and his friend the apothecary, who accompanied him as far at least as the threshold of danger was this: they would take four or five gills apiece of the choicest Canary while taking their rounds, before they returned home to dinner. Thus primed, the doctor would enter without fear into many infected families, while the apothecary, from whom our authority (Dr. Daniel Turner) had his information, "durst not accompany him; but rather chose to wait at the sack shop, as he called it, till the doctor had returned from his last visit for the forenoon, and brought him his orders." The glasses from which they drank were previously washed in strong white wine vinegar, and, having taken their quarter of a pint, they dropped their money, in accordance with the sanitary arrangements of the time, into a vessel of water which stood on the counter for that purpose.

The doctor's daily routine, as described by him-

self, is somewhat amusing. On rising in the morning (which was early) he would take "the quantity of a nutmeg of his *Antipestilential Electuary*." After this precaution "I ventured," he says, "into a large room, where crowds of citizens used to be awaiting for me, and there I commonly spent two or three hours, as in an hospital, examining the several conditions . . . of all who came thither, some of which had ulcers yet uncured, and others to be advised under the first symptoms of seizure, all which I endeavoured to despatch with all possible care to their various exigencies." The patients got rid of, the learned physician had his breakfast, after which, till dinner time, he employed himself in visiting the sick at their own houses. Upon his entrance, he informs us, "I had immediately burnt some proper thing [by way of fumigation] upon coals, and also kept in my mouth some lozenges all the while I was examining them." He never entered any infected

house when the pores were opened by active exercise, or, as he himself expresses it, when "I sweated or was short-breathed with walking, and kept my mind as composed as possible, being sufficiently warned by such who had grievously suffered by uneasiness in that respect." Some hours were consumed in these visits before he returned home. Before dinner he always had "a glass of sack [possibly three or four] to warm the stomach, refresh the spirits, and dissipate any [possible] lodgment of the infection." "I chose," he says, "meats . . . that yealded an easie and generous nourishment, roasted rather than boiled, and pickles not only suitable to the meats, but the nature of the distemper. . . . I seldom, likewise, rose from dinner [we may be sure he did not] without drinking more wine. After this I had always many persons [who] came for advice, and as soon as I could despatch them I again visited till eight or nine at night,

and then concluded the evening at home by drinking to cheerfulness of my old favourite liquor, which encouraged sleep and an easie breathing through the pores all night. But if in the day time I found the least approaches of the infection upon me, as by giddiness, loathing at stomach, and faintness, I immediately had recourse to a glass of this wine, which presently drove these beginning disorders away by transpiration. In the whole course of the sickness, I found myself ill but twice, and was soon again cleared of its approaches by these means, the help of an issue contributing, and of such antidotes as I always kept by me." "Gratitude," he says in another place, "obliges me to do justice to the vertues of *sack*, as it is deservedly ranked among the principal antidotes, whether drank by itself or impregnated with wormwood, angelica, etc., for I have never yet met with anything so agreeable to the nerves or spirits in all my experience." And

then he launches into a description of his favourite antidote: "that which is best is middle aged, neat, fine, bright, racey, and of a walnut flavour; and it is certainly true that during the late fatal times both the infected and the well found most benefit from it, unless they used it too intemperately."

Ay! "too intemperately": *there* was the rub. "Sack," we are afraid, was a dangerous though a grateful antidote to this brave but blundering doctor. Whether he was or was not the learned physician who is mentioned by Defoe as one who accustomed himself to the use of "cordials and wine" in such measure that he "became a sot for all his life after," it is certain that poor Hodges drew his last breath in the debtors' prison of Ludgate, where he died in 1684. Had he been as steady as might have been wished, it is unlikely that a man of his scholarly attainments [see his Latin account of the plague], birth, learning, and

extensive practice, would have come to so miserable an ending.

In the British Museum is a broad-sheet printed during the visitation of 1665. It is framed in a deep black border, relieved by cheerful figures of skulls, cross-bones, mattocks, and skeletons, the sheet being surmounted by a roughly executed woodcut representing the destroying angel hovering over the devoted city. In the foreground stands Death, holding in one hand a dart as large and as heavy as himself, and in the other an hour-glass. The sheet contains a list of the numbers who died in London weekly during that year, the printed list ending June 13th (when it was probably printed), the record being afterwards continued in MS. According to this, in the week ending 25th of April, 1665, the total burials was 398, two only having died of plague. On the

\* There is a monument to Hodges in the Church of St. Stephen's, Walbrook.

4th of July the number had mounted up to 1,006, of which 470 were plague patients. For the week ending 29th of August, the number is stated at 7,496, of which 6,102 had died of the plague. On the 19th of September the number was 8,297, 7,165 thereof having died of the pestilence. This appears to be the highest return. After this week the number lessened in an extraordinary ratio, and by the 26th of December the burials were only 330, 152 being plague patients. By the 20th of February, 1665-6, when the record ends, the number of burials was 252, of which only 69 are of plague patients. It must be remembered that none of these figures are accurate, the mode of registration being worse than defective. No one, in fact, will ever know the actual number who fell victims to the pestilence during the plague year of 1665.

We have before us an original letter, written to Dr. Sancroft, Dean of St. Paul's, by Tillison, on September 14th, 1665, which gives a vivid picture

of this dreadful time, and an extract from it may prove interesting. Sancroft would appear to have been one of the clergy referred to in the "Journal of the Plague Year," who had deserted their posts :—

"Death stares us continually in the face in every infected person that passeth by and in every coffin which is daily and hourly carried along the streets; the bodies now cease to putt us in minde of our mortallity. The custom was in the beginning to bury the dead in the night onely; now both night and day will hardly be tyme enough to do it. For the last week mortallity did too apparently evidence that the dead was piled in heapes above ground for some houres together, before either tyme could be gained or place to bury them in. . . . The disease itself (as is acknowledged by our practitioners in phisic) was more favourable in the beginninge of the contagion; now more fierce and violent—and they themselves do



likewise confesse to stand amazed to meet with soe many various symptomes which they finde amongst their patients. One week the generall distempers [*prevailing symptoms*] are botches and boiles, the next week as cleare skin as may be, but Death spares neither. One week full of spotts and *tokens*, and perhaps the succeeding will none at all. Now taken with a vomiting and loosenesse, and within 2 or 3 dayes almost a generall raging madnesse. One while patients used to linger 4 or 5 dayes, att other tymes not 48 houres; and all this very tyme wee finde it more quick [*virulent*] than ever it was. Many are sick, and few escape. Where it has had its fling there it decreases; where it has not been long there it increases. It rained most heretofore in allyes, etc.; now it domineers in the open streets. The poorer sort was first most afflicted, now the richer bear a share. Captain Colchester is dead. Fleetham and all his family are clearly swept away, except one mayd. Dr.

Burnett and Dr. Glover and 1 or 2 more of the Colledge of Phisitians, with Dr. O'Dowd, who was licensed by my Lord Grace of Canterbury, some surgeons, apothecaryes, and Johnson the chymist, dyed all very suddenly. Some say (but God forbid that I should report it for truth) that there is a consultation together, if not all yet the greater parte of them attempted to open a dead corps which was full of the tokens; and being in hand with the dissected body some fell down dead immediately, and others did not outlive the next day at noone." The writer assures the "reverend absentee that all are well and in safety at his house; gives him other household information; and concludes with telling him in a side note that he keeps the rooms fumigated with "brimstone, hops, pepper, and frankincense, etc." \*

The variation in the symptoms mentioned in this letter are confirmed by Hodges. The usual pre-

\* Harl. MS., 3785, fol. 50.

monitory signs were chilliness and shivering; then followed convulsive motions, nausea, carbuncles, intolerable headache, frenzy, fever; after the fever faintness, violent palpitation of the heart, lassitude, blains or pustules, which were apt to mortify if "unadvisedly opened" (they were usually so painful that they could not bear the lancet). These swellings, or "buboes," as Hodges calls them, were sometimes as large as a "halfpenny loaf, in others not exceeding an hen's egg," the fever generally subsiding as these tumours "ripened and were fitted for apertion." The "tokens" mentioned in Tillison's letter were spots upon the skin, which oftentimes showed themselves without any premonitory symptoms when the patient was apparently in strong health, good spirits and appetite, and were considered, Hodges tells us, as evidence that the disease had taken a fatal hold upon the system. This description may be compared with that given by Defoe, a description generally so

accurate, that it was believed by many of his contemporaries and successors to have been the "journal" of one who personally remembered the facts.

"The pain of the swelling was in particular very violent, and to some intollerable; the physicians and surgeons may be said to have tortured many poor creatures even to death. The swellings in some grew hard, and they apply'd violent drawing plasters or poultices to break them; and if these did not do, they cut and scarified them in a terrible manner. In some those swellings were made hard, partly by the force of the distemper, and partly by their being too violently drawn, and were so hard, that no instrument could cut them, and then they burnt them with caustics, so that many died raving mad with the torment, and some in the very operation. In these distresses, some for want of help to hold them down in their beds, or to look to them, laid hands upon

themselves, . . . some broke out into the streets, perhaps naked, and would run directly down to the river, if they were not stopt by the watchmen, or other officers, and plunge themselves into the water, wherever they found it.

“It often pierc’d my very soul to hear the groans and crys of those who were thus tormented; but of the two this was counted the most promising particular in the whole infection, for, if these swellings could be brought to a head, and to break and run, or as the surgeons call it to digest, the patient generally recover’d; whereas those, who, like the gentlewoman’s daughter, were struck with death at the beginning, and had the *tokens* come out upon them, often went about indifferent easy, till a little before they died, and some till the moment they dropt down, as in apoplexies and epilepsies, is often the case; such would be taken suddenly very sick, and would run to a bench or bulk, or any convenient place that offer’d itself,

or to their own homes, if possible, as I mentioned before, and then sit down, grow faint and die. This kind of dying was much the same, as it was with those who die of common mortifications, who die swooning, and, as it were, go away in a dream; such as died thus had very little notice of their being infected at all, till the gangrene was spread thro' their whole body; nor could physicians themselves know certainly how it was with them, till they opened their breasts, or other parts of their body, and saw the *tokens*."

The barbarous treatment to which Defoe alludes Hodges was opposed to; and it will be remembered that he says the infected "found most benefit" from the moderate use of his favourite remedy:—"middle aged, neat, fine, bright, racey" sack "of a walnut flavour." Bleeding and "scarification" he distinctly set his face against. "Indeed," he says, "I should pass it by here as fatal, but that I know many unskilful and rash persons who not

only let blood largely at one time, but order it likewise to be repeated until the patient faints." It may here be mentioned that one attack of plague did not protect the patient from a second or more. Hodges mentions cases in which he had known persons attacked twice, thrice, nay, even as many as six times, the last cases often proving fatal.

With reference to antidotes, Defoe mentions the case of one of the bearers of the dead who, unlike many of his *confrères*, survived the whole of the ordeal. It was the duty of these men to fetch on a hand-barrow the bodies of those who died in the narrow alleys and courts of old London (to be opened up next year by the "great fire") and so carry them to the carts waiting in the main thoroughfares to receive them. This man lived twenty years after the pestilence had passed away, and was sexton of his parish to the time of his death. His principal safeguard was tobacco, and when by any chance his pipe was not in his mouth

he supplied its place with garlic and rue. Hodges, although fond of sack, was a profound anti-tobacconist, and would not admit the virtues of the fragrant weed, the nature of which, like all non-smokers, he failed to understand. His remarks in reference to it will be received at least as original and amusing. "It remains," he says, "that we now say somewhat concerning the use of tobacco, whose virtues for this purpose are extreamly cried up by Diemebroeck and some others; but whether we regard the narcotic quality of this American henbane, or the poisonous oil which exhales from it in smoking, or that prodigious discharge of spittle which it occasions, and which nature wants for many other important occasions, or, lastly, the exercise it gives to the lungs in drawing it, *besides the aptitude of the pestilential poison to be taken down with it*, and the irksomeness of its scent, I must confess myself at uncertainties about it; though, as to myself,



I am its professed enemy, and was accustomed [as we all know] to supply its place as an antidote with sack." It might have been better for Hodges, poor fellow, had he imbibed less of his favourite beverage and smoked a pipe of mild Virginia tobacco.

Thieves were busy during the paralysis which attacked the powers, whether civil, civic, or military, during the dreadful visitation of 1665, and, strange to say, they were nearly all women. Few of the sterner sex, it would seem, had the hardihood to avail themselves of the opportunities which offered. Four male plunderers, however, acquired some reputation, and it was reported that they carried about them sponges saturated with prepared vinegar. This circumstance led the public to imagine that this was a sovereign preservative against infection, and large quantities were sold by the apothecaries under the name of "Four thieves' vinegar," a name which is known to the trade at the

present day. Vinegar, it may be mentioned, was largely used as a preservative by the nurses, and generally with good effect.

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After 1665, and the great fire of the following year, which opened up the crowded lanes and alleys of London, and the removal of the traders into the wider thoroughfares of Paul's, Ludgate, Fleet Street, and the Strand,\* the plague and other foreign pestilences practically ceased to trouble us. More than a century and a half intervened, and then a dreaded and most formidable visitor was announced as being on its way to visit these shores from its usual Asiatic hunting grounds. The cholera appeared in India in 1774, and became endemic in Lower Bengal in 1817, whence it gradually moved on till it reached Russia in 1830, and Germany in 1831. It announced its advent in England at Sunderland on the 26th of October, 1831, reaching

\* "Collection of scarce pieces relating to the last plague in . . . 1665," 1721.

London in six months afterwards; but, although the mortality was very great, the state of England and English ideas of cleanliness and precaution, shamefully imperfect as they were, proved different to those which had prevailed a hundred and sixty-seven years before. Each subsequent visit its effects are likely to be greatly modified. For instance, in England and Wales 53,293 persons died of cholera in the visit of 1848-9, and 20,097 in 1854. These figures speak for themselves. The mere fact that cholera proved peculiarly fatal during its present continental progress seems of little practical consequence, English ideas of sanitary arrangements being far in advance of those prevailing on the Continent generally. Although, like the plague, it is one of the diseases which has up to this time practically baffled the skill of modern medicine, the opponents it specially dreads (in common with all malignant pestilential diseases) are cleanliness, good drainage, fresh air, and sufficiency of wholesome food.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE OLD DOCTOR AND HIS REMEDIES.

IN the early days of credulity and superstition the popular mind was prepared to receive as a remedy anything of a mysterious character. The clerical professors of medicine were mainly responsible for this state of things. Ignorant themselves of any medical science, they had taught the popular mind to believe in the medicinal virtues of relics; and the man who could put faith in the remedial virtues of a fragment of bone, the saintly authenticity of which was usually more than doubtful, was prepared of course to believe in any absurdity, however grotesque. It was a necessary consequence of the descent of medicine from these

clerical practitioners, and from still more ancient and much more venerable authorities, that it should come into the hands of the doctors, tainted to some extent with superstition. If the physician laughed, as no doubt he did laugh, at the credulity of the vulgar, his remedies nevertheless appealed in no small degree to the imagination, and sometimes to the superstition, of his patient; and the reason of this was, that medicine at that time was a matter of theory rather than a practical and useful science. If he did not exactly believe in the medical properties of amulets, he winked at their use, because he found that they worked benefit by appealing to the imagination and the faith of the wearer. That the physician himself was credulous and superstitious is proved by the fact that, so late as the commencement of the eighteenth century, we find him placing to the credit of his absurd "sympathetic" ointment the cure which was really due to the unassisted operations of nature. The

old physician, it must be remembered, was an astrologer; and the superstition of a man who could pin his faith to "astrology" was capable, we may well believe, of covering a considerable area of ground.

The leaven of credulity and superstition had leavened the whole mass. When learned judges were condemning poor old men and women to death by burning, for casting a spell upon the cattle, the crops, or the children of their neighbours,\* what may we expect of the general multitude? The popular mind absolutely revelled in preposterous absurdities, and this credulity was not confined, be it observed, to the ignorant vulgar. A ring made of the *hinge* of a coffin was credited

\* On the 4th of April, 1593, the three Samuels of Warboys were condemned by Mr. Justice Fenner at Huntingdon for bewitching, with the aid of *nine* familiars (one of whom was called *Pluck*), the children of Mr. Trookmorton. They were executed, and their goods escheated to Sir Thomas Cromwell as Lord of the Manor. An annual lecture was founded on the subject of *witchcraft*, to be preached in the presence of the corporation of Huntingdon every Lady-day, by a Doctor or Bachelor of Divinity of Queen's College, Cambridge.

with the power of relieving cramps, which also received solace when a rusty old sword was hung up by the patient's bed-side. Nails driven into an oak tree were not a cure, but a preservative against toothache. A halter which had served to hang a criminal withal, when bound round the temples was found an infallible remedy for headache. A still more efficacious remedy was found, of course, in the "moss" growing on a human skull, which moss was dried and pulverised, and then taken by way of cephalic snuff. A dead man's hand could dispel tumours of the glands by stroking the parts *nine* times; but the hand of a man who had been *cut down* from the gallows-tree was, we need not say, a remedy *infinitely* more efficacious. Some of these remedies still exist among the superstitious poor of the provinces, although the formula, of course, is not now strictly adhered to, the game being emphatically hardly "worth the candle." To cure warts, for instance, the best

thing was to *steal* a piece of beef from the butcher, with which the warts were to be rubbed, after which it was to be interred in any filth, and as the process of decomposition went on the warts would wither and disappear.

The chips of a gallows on which *several* persons had been hanged, when worn in a bag round the neck, was pronounced an infallible cure for the ague. The nightmare, supposed, of course, to be caused by supernatural agency, was banished by means of a stone with a hole in it being suspended at the head of the sufferer's bed. This last remedy went by the name of a "hagstone," because it prevented the witches, who of course wrought the mischief, from sitting on the patient's stomach. Its effect upon these mischievous old crones was singularly deterrent. The poor old creatures who could not have sat a horse the moment he began to walk, were credited with riding these animals over the moorland at headlong speed in the dead



of night, when better disposed and less frisky people were wrapped in slumber. A "hagstone" tied to the *key* of the stable door at once put a stop to these heathenish vagaries.

Some of these remedies were undoubtedly effectual, for the simple reason that they appealed directly to the superstition and the imagination of the ignorant and credulous, and what the imagination is capable of doing in the alteration and cure of disease, we all know by reference to the so-called "modern miracles," which are being performed at this very time at Lourdes, to the great edification of the faithful, the absurdity of which "miracles" we shall expose in a later chapter. If the imagination is capable, as we know it is, of simulating or assuming the form of disease in a highly nervous temperament, it is capable in a great degree, if not of counteracting and repelling it, of mitigating and diminishing some of its virulence. This fact was known alike to the wise old

physician and to the old empiric, and each made use of his knowledge always to the advantage of himself, and not unfrequently to the great advantage of his patient.

Dr. Napper (time of Charles I.), who probably received his certificate to practice from the office of the Archbishop, in accordance with a privilege which, as we shall afterwards see, continued to be exercised far into the last century, cured the "falling sickness" (*i.e.*, *epilepsy*) by means of what he called "constellated rings." A girl, afflicted with this dire disease, applied to him for relief, and received a "constellated ring," which she wore in accordance with his directions, and perfectly recovered. Her parents unwisely told some of the narrow-minded Puritan divines of the fact, who said, with unusually elongated visages, that the cure was due to the agency of Satan, and advised them to throw the accursed ring away. "God," they said, "would withhold His blessing, so long

as the maid wore so devilish a token." The ring accordingly was thrown into a well; and the girl's imagination, deprived of its safeguard, began, as might have been expected, to work mischievously, and she became epileptic as before. The parents at last had the well cleaned out, the ring was recovered and worn again by the girl, whereupon the fits again left her. A year or two afterwards the stupid Puritans, who deemed it nothing less than satanical to humour the imagination, and thus assist the beneficent operations of Nature, found it out, and gave the parents no rest or peace till they had again thrown the ring away. The fits soon returned with such violence that the simpletons were forced once more to apply to the doctor, stupidly relating the whole story, and humbly invoking his assistance. If they had said they had lost the ring, Napper would probably have helped them, but as it was, he firmly refused to do anything for them. "Those," he said, taking

up the parable of the pharisaical Puritans, who looked askant at him and his useful buffoonery, "Those who despise God's mercies are incapable or unworthy of enjoying them ;" and so, between the astute doctor, the ignorant parents, and their prejudiced and mischievous advisers, the unfortunate patient came to grief. We take the case on the authority of the celebrated William Lilly, the "Sidrophel" of *Hudibras*, the contemporary and friend of Napper, and there is no doubt whatever as to its authenticity, which is more than may be said for the so-called "miracles" at Lourdes.

The power of the imagination in the alleviation and cure of disease is proved by the thousands and thousands of persons who resorted to the Stuarts to be cured of the scrofula by the imposition of the royal hand, the particulars of which we have of course no intention of reproducing here. Probably in the vast majority of cases the patients who

were brought by their parents and friends to these popular levées, were not afflicted with scrofula, or indeed any serious mischief. The Hon. Daines Barrington, in his "Observations on the More Ancient Statutes," tells us of an old man, a witness in a cause, who stated that when Queen Anne was at Oxford she had touched him for the "Evil" whilst a child. Barrington asked him, when he had concluded his examination in chief, whether he meant to tell them seriously that he was really cured. The old man answered, "with a significant smile," that he believed he had never "had a complaint that deserved to be considered the Evil, but that his parents were poor, *and had no objection to the bit of gold*" which was often given away on these occasions. This will account, in some measure at least, for the great resort of patients, and the miraculous cures which were supposed to, and sometimes even did follow. That such cures, when they really happened, were oftentimes only tem-

porary, there is evidence to show,—a fact which goes to prove (as in the case of Dr. Napper's maid) that, when the effect of the imagination had passed away, the mischief, if serious, was liable to return.

An amusing illustration, true or untrue, of the power of the imagination to which we have alluded will be found in Aubrey's "Miscellanies." The incident occurred immediately after the Restoration. One Avise Evans, being afflicted with a Bardolphian or "fungous nose," had an impression that it was revealed to him, that the king's hand would effect a perfect cure. So strongly was he impressed with this conviction, that the first time Charles II. made his appearance in St. James's Park, Evans, who had been long awaiting, and had secured an advantageous position, seized the king's hand, kissed it, and rubbed his preposterous snout therewith, which naturally enough astonished and "disturbed the king;" but, as we are told, really

cured the fungous and unsightly protuberance which Avise Evans had been accustomed to term his "nose." Whether the "fungus" ceased thenceforth to trouble the poor man is an interesting question which we are unable to answer either yea or nay.

"Kings and Kings sones," says old Andrew Borde in his quaint English, "and other noble men, hath ben eximious [eminent] physicians," which we should construe into the modern rendering, that they were the most successful quacks of their time. The populace, apparently impressed with that "Divinity" which "doth hedge a king," credited the royal hand with virtues which he was enabled to transfer to anything which he consecrated or dedicated to remedial purposes. Rheumatic affections—numbness—incipient paralysis, were all known to our forefathers under the general term of "cramp;" and for these affections the "cramp ring," which received its virtues directly from the hands

of the sovereign, was considered a most potent remedy. The mode in which the rings received their healing virtues is described in "An Ancient Book of Ceremonial of the Kings of England," in MS., quoted by Bishop Percy, in his "Northumberland Household Book."\* The ceremony seems usually to have been performed on Good Friday, or some other day set apart for devotional purposes. The king, we are told, would come to his chapel, "or closet," with his lords, without any sword being borne before him, as was usual in other public ceremonies, and there he waited until the bishop and the dean had "brought in the crucifixe out of the vestrie, and laide it upon the cushion before the high Altar." It was then the duty of "the usher to lay a carpett for the Kinge to creepe to the crosse upon, and that done," a form was "sett upon the carpett before the crucifix, and a cushion laid upon it [the carpet] for the

\* Ed. 1827, p. 436.



Kinge to kneele upon. And the master of the Jewell House" was to stand ready "with the crampe rings in a Basin of Silver," while the clerk of the closet also waited "with the Booke concerninge the hallowinge of the Crampe rings," the almoner at the same time kneeling "on the right hand of the Kinge holdinge the sayd booke. When that is done, the Kinge shall rise and goe to the Altar, wheare a gentleman usher shall be redie with a cushion for the King to kneele upon. And then the greatest Lords that shall be ther to take the Basin with the rings and beare them after the Kinge to offer." No wonder that, after such a solemn piece of mummary, the rings were considered in those credulous days infallible against the insidious approaches of disease.

Learned or unlearned, wise or unwise, lettered or unlettered, the minds of men were all more or less warped with a credulity which, to our matter-of-fact vision, appears (with some injustice, perhaps)

nothing less than preposterous. Lord Chancellor Hatton, writing to Sir Thomas Smith during the prevalence of an alarming epidemic, makes "bold to recommend his most humble duty to our dear Mistress [Queen Elizabeth] by this letter and ~~ring~~, which hath the virtue to expel infectious airs," and trusts that, "when the virtue is known, it shall not be refused for its [small intrinsic] value." The learned Robert Burton tells us, that when spending his vacation at his father's house at Lindley, in Leicestershire, he for the first time "observed an amulet of a spider in a nutshell lapped in silk, so applied [carried about her] by my mother; whom, although I knew to have excellent skill in chirurgery, sore eyes, aches, etc., and such experimental medicines, as all the country where she dwelt can witness, to have done many famous and good cures upon divers poor folks, that were otherwise destitute of help; yet, among all other experiments, this, methought, was most

absurd and ridiculous. I could see no warrant for it. *Quid aranea cum febre?* For what antipathy? Till at length, rambling amongst authors (as often I do), I found this very medicine in Dioscorides, approved by Matthiolus, repeated by Aldrovandus, *cap.* 'De Aranea,' *lib.* 'De Insectis.' I began to have a better opinion of it, and to give more credit to amulets, *when I saw it in some parties answer to experience.*" The singular thing is, that Burton's strong common-sense is unable to recognise the power of *faith* in matters of this kind, and that he places his trust in the virtues of this preposterous amulet, simply because those virtues were proclaimed by learned dry-as-dust authorities. The author of the "Anatomy of Melancholy" drew, however, the line somewhere. He put no faith, for instance, "in words, characters, spells, and charms," which were commonly worn in some envelope or covering, and which, he tells us, can do no "good at all, but out of a strong conceit, as Pomponius proves, or

the devil's policy, who is the first founder and teacher of them." Pomponius notwithstanding, our unsophisticated minds can see small difference between the virtues of a spider "lapped in silk," and an amulet which enclosed some word or sentence of mystic import. Appealing, as each did, to the *faith* of the wearer, one seems as likely to effect as much good as the other, provided always the wearer was ignorant of Pomponius and Dioscorides.

The spider enclosed in his silken shroud had received the sanction of divers ancient medical authorities. Among the so-called antidotes or remedies which were handed down to the old physicians by their still more ancient predecessors, it seems to us fitting that we should mention in this place the unicorn's horn, an accepted antidote against poison. The ancient naturalists taught that the fabulous animal which took the place of, and did duty for, the rhinoceros of later days was

itself perfectly conscious of the sanitary virtues which resided in its nasal protuberance, and would dip its horn in the water to purify and sweeten it ere it would drink. In one of those marvellous compositions of the days of "good Queen Bess," in which the writer was wont to draw largely upon his own imagination and the credulity of his readers, Captain Webb relates how, after having taken service with the King of France, and been promoted to some position therein, he incurred the envy and ill-will of the native soldiery. "But shortly," he tells us, "after my first arrivall in Fraunce, I was hated by some lewd gunners; who, envying that I should have the title to be master gunner in Fraunce, practised against me, and gave me poyson in drinke that night, which thinge, when the King understood, he gave order to the Governor of Deepe that his Phisitian should presently see unto me, who gave me speedely *unicorne's horne* to drinke, and there by God and the King's

great goodness, I was again restored to my former health."

Its enormous price rendered the common use of this absurd remedial agent impossible. Thomas Decker speaks (in 1609) of "the unicorn, whose horn is worth half a city"; and Andrea Racci, a Florentine physician, relates that it had been sold by the apothecaries of Florence for as much as £24 sterling *the ounce*. Ambrose Paré, however, exposed the cheating practices of these quack-salving vendors. Nevertheless, the virtues of the unicorn's horn found favour with the physicians of the seventeenth century. Dr. Hodges admits that he administered it to some of his plague patients in the hope that it would prove an antidote against the pestilential poison, but the result, he acknowledges, was anything but satisfactory. He puts more faith in "troches of vipers" or "volatile salt of vipers," and, above all, in "troches made of the flesh of a rattlesnake," which had

been sent over to him by a friend in New England.

We are tempted to give a few fragments of old medical practice, warranted to effect complete and perfect cures.

The following "excellent cure for the gout" is recommended in Nicholas Culpepper's "*Fragmenta Aurea*," 1659 \* : "Take a young puppy, *all one colour*, if you can get such a one, and cut him in two pieces through the back *alive*, and lay one side hot to the grieved place, the inner side I mean." "The roots of henbane, being stamped and warmed and applied to the place," was also a cure for gout, both in the feet and in the knees. The reason is obvious. Henbane is "an herb of Jupiter whose sign is *Sagittarius* and *Pisces*," and, therefore, "rules the knees and feet;" *ergo*, henbane cured

\* Culpepper describes himself as a "late student in physic and astrology." He was born 18th October, 1616, and died 10th January, 1653-4, his end being hastened it is said, by excessive smoking. He was one of the apothecaries described in a former chapter.

the gout in the great toe. It may be useful to the gouty reader to know this.

The same learned authority prescribes the following remedy for "squianancy," which we call in these days *quinsey*: "Take a silk thread [dipped] in the blood of a mouse, and let the party swallow it down that is troubled with the *squianancy*, pain, or swelling, in the throat, and it will cure him." For toothache, the learned apothecary-physician recommends the martyr to apply "a little spirit of vitriol" to his pained tooth, by means of lint "tyed to the top of a bodkin or wire." This, he assures us, will work a perfect cure. "But be sure," he cautions us, "you take not the *oyl* of vitriol instead of spirit, for if you do, you will make foul work."

For swellings he advises a literally swinish remedy. "Mark," he says, "where a swine rubs himself, then cut off a piece of the wood, and rub any swoln place with it, and it will help it; [but]



with this proviso, that where the hog rubs his head, it helps the swellings of the head, and where the neck, those of the neck, etc. If you cannot apply a part of the thing the hog rubbed against to the grieved place you must [on the principle of Mahomet and the mountain, accommodate yourself to circumstances, and] apply the grieved place to that."

To know the duration, and above all, the ultimate issue of a sickness, is a gift which many a modern physician might envy. Culpepper arrived at a solution of the difficulty, which appears to have been satisfactory to himself, if it is not as entirely satisfactory to us. "Number," he says, "the dayes from the twenty-six day of June, to the day when a party first began to fall sick, and divide the number by three; if one remain, he will be long sick; if two, he will die; if none, he will quickly recover." This recipe is replete with occult qualities, "which is all one with saying that we do not

understand how they work.”\* The only patients, for instance, who will die according to the above table or reckoning, are those who fall sick on the 4th of July. Any hope of arriving at “one” or “nothing” after this date, becomes a task as hopeless as the labours of Sisyphus.

Andrew Borde, physician [1500—1549], owns, with much *naïveté*, that *prurigo* (a troublesome itching of the skin, arising from various causes, and of which there are several different kinds) was altogether beyond the power of his remedial skill. But “this I do advertise every man,” he says, “for this matter [ailment] to ordeyne or prepare a good paire of nayles, to cracke [scratch] and clawe, and to rent and teare the skynne and the fleshe, that the corrupt bloud maye runne out of the fleshe . . . and beware,” he advises his patients, “reverberate not the cause inwarde with no oyntment,” and “clawe not the skyn with fyshye fyngers, but

\* L'Estrange.

washe the handes to bedwards" [at bed time]. So much by way of specimen of Borde's "style:" it may be more convenient if henceforth we put his language into modern spelling.

*Calculus*, Borde tells us, was caused "either by nature, or else by eating of evil and viscous [glutinous] meats and evil drinks, as thick ale or beer, eating broiled and fried meats, or meats that be dried in the smoke," such "as bacon, martinmas beef, red herring, sprats, and salt meats, and crusts of bread, or of pasties, and such like." If it come by nature, he comes to the conclusion that there is no remedy, although "a man may, indeed, mitigate

\* Andrew Borde, physician, was born at Pevensey, in Sussex, and educated at Oxford. Before he took a degree there, he became a brother of the Carthusian order, of which, however, he soon grew tired; and having a taste for rambling, travelled far and wide, or, as Timperley expresses it, "through and round about Christendom, and out of Christendom." On his return he settled down at Winchester, where he practised his profession with success. In 1541 or 1542, he was at Montpellier, where he probably took his degree and afterwards took his English degree at Oxford. For some reason which is not known he was committed close prisoner to the Fleet where he seems to have died in April 1549.

the pain and break" the mischief "for a time;" but "if it do come accidentally," then he mentions several remedies, specially recommending his "own practice," which was as follows:—

"First, I do use a diet, eating no new bread, except it be twenty-four hours old. I refuse cake, bread, saffron bread, rye bread, leavened bread, craknels, symnels\*, and all manner of crusts; then I do drink no new ale, nor no manner of beer made with hops, nor hot wines. I do refrain from flesh and fish which be dried in the smoke, and from salt meats and shell fishes. I do eat no gross meats, nor burned flesh, nor fish." We presume that no modern physician would take exception to this sensible dietary. "Thus using myself," continues Borde, "I thank God I did make myself whole, and many others." The learned doctor had, however, gone through a preliminary "course" of

\* A kind of rich cake, generally made in a three-cornered form. The term is applied in Salop to a plum-cake with a raised crust.

physic in the shape of a powder, composed of the following ingredients :—"of brome seeds, of perilles seeds, of saxifrage seeds, of gromil seeds, of either of these an ounce ; of gete stone a quarter of an ounce ; of date stone as much ; of egg shells that chicken hath lain in, the pith pulled out, half an ounce." Of this powder he took "half a spoonful morning and evening," in "posset ale or white wine," to serve, maybe, as a corrective to the *egg shells*.

In the old drinking days of Queen Anne and her successors, this painful malady was the peculiar dread of our ancestors, and nostrums were habitually taken which were supposed, not only to cure, but to ward off the approach of the disease. The readers of Addison will remember how, in one of those delightful papers in which he chronicles the sayings and doings of Sir Roger de Coverley, the knight, after dressing and being shaved by his butler, is described as calling for a "glass of the

Widow Trueby's Water," which he asserted to be the best possible safeguard "in the world" against this miserable malady. The Widow Trueby, a neighbour of the knight, was one of the charitable ladies common enough in the provinces a century and half ago; and we may well believe that her simples "did more good than all the doctors and apothecaries in the county" put together. She distilled every poppy that grew within five miles of her, and distributed the water referred to "gratis among all sorts of people," Sir Roger among the number.

The favourite remedy for *calculus*, which carried off thousands of victims in the hard-drinking days of George II., was a nostrum prepared by Joanna Stephens, which was largely patronised by the medical lights of the time. Joanna Stephens was a contemporary of the vulgar Mrs. Mapp, and, like Mrs. Mapp, was a successful quack. She lived at a time when quackery was rampant in the Church,

in the army, in every department of the State. The quacks had invaded the medical profession with triumphant success; and "the Chevalier" John Taylor, Sally Mapp, Joshua Ward, Joanna Stephens, and "Doctor" Misaubin, were doing a business which drove the regular practitioners completely into the shade. The so-called remedy invented by Joanna Stephens was specially taken up by David Hartley, a celebrated physician of the time. The doctor published in 1738-9 various tracts in favour of Mrs. Stephens' remedy "as a solvent for" calculus, setting forth 153 so-called successful cases (his own case being No. 123), and Hartley was chiefly instrumental in obtaining from Parliament, in 1739, a grant of £5,000 in favour of the lucky inventor, beside a private subscription of £1,356 more. Notwithstanding which fact, says Mr. William Wadd, Surgeon-Extraordinary to the King (writing in 1827) "there have been as many human *calculi* since formed by his Majesty's liege

lithomical subjects, as would macadamise one side of Lincoln's Inn Fields." One of the principal ingredients in this infallible nostrum was soap; and the humiliating moral of Dr. Hartley's commendation and his patronage of the inventor is found in the fact that the doctor himself died of *calculus* in 1757, after swallowing, it was said, *two hundred pounds' weight of soap* through the medium of the remedy he so strongly believed in. Lord Orford, the father of Horace Walpole, was induced to try "Mrs. Stephens'" remedy on the recommendation of his physician. Horace refers to the specific, and to the fears which he entertained of the effect of its action, in a letter written to Sir Horace Mann, on 14th January, 1745. His lordship died two months later on, declaring, it was said, on his deathbed, that he fell a victim to the neglect of his own maxim—*quieta non movere*. We doubt this much. If Lord Orford suffered under the painful and dangerous disease for which the nostrum



was prescribed, depend upon it, it was the malady and not the so-called remedy which finished him.

Among the nostrums warranted to effect perfect cures, which received the countenance of the faculty a century and a half ago, we may mention "Goddard's Drops," which owed their name and also their invention, it was said, to Jonathan Goddard, Fellow of the Royal Society, Medical Professor of Gresham College, and whilom physician and confidant of Cromwell.\* This once favourite remedy is mentioned in No. 21 of the *Tatler*, and also by Swift, in a punning reference considerably below the usual standard of his brilliant wit.† "Sir

\* In the Sloane MS. 958, there is an entry, in a memorandum book in the hand-writing of John Coniers, an apothecary in Shoe Lane :— "March 24, 1674-5. About ten o'clock that night my very good friend, Dr. Jonathan Goddard, reader of the physic lectures at Gresham College suddenly fell down dead in the street, as he was entering a coach. He was a pretty corpulent and tall man, a bachelor between 45 and 50 years of age; he was melancholy, inclined to be cynical, and used now and then to complain of giddiness in his head. He was an excellent mathematician, and sometime physician to Oliver the Protector."

† "A man in a dropsy *drops* he not,

In spite of *Goddard's Drops*,

Though none are reckoned such high drops."

Walter Raleigh's Cordial" and "Daffy's Elixir," it will be remembered, were two of the nostrums administered to Queen Caroline in her last illness, under the sanction of her physicians. Our ancestors, especially "the Upper Ten," were confirmed medicine takers, and the "Cordial" and the famous "Jesuits' Powder" were favourite remedies with the celebrated Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough. It is conceivable that mixtures of this kind would do no harm, and might even do good, when administered under medical sanction and under certain conditions; and this is proved by the case of the Duchesse de Berri, who rallied under the influence of Garus' "Elixir," simply because the criminally ignorant medical quacks who had previously mismanaged the case, had brought her down to the gates of death. On the other hand, taken unadvisedly, popular remedies may do fatal mischief, as in the case of Oliver Goldsmith, who is believed to have hastened his end by imprudently resorting

to a remedy patronised by the physicians of his time, and which was wholly unsuited to his disease.

The following is a copy of the advertisement of "Daffy's Elixir," as it appeared in the newspapers of the reign of Queen Anne\* :—"Daffy's famous *Elixir Salutis*, prepared by Catherine Daffy, daughter of Mr. Thomas Daffy, late rector of Red-mile, in the Valley of Belvoir, who imparted it to his Kinsman, Mr. Anthony Daffy, who published the same to the benefit of the community and his own great advantage. The original receipt is now in my possession, left to me by my father. My own brother, Mr. Daniel Daffy, apothecary in Nottingham, made this *Elixir* from the said receipt, and sold it there during his life. Those who know it will believe what I declare; and those who do not, may be convinced that I am no counterfeit by the colour, taste, smell, and operation of my

\* *Post Boy*, January 1st, 1707-8.

*Elixir.* To be had at the Hand and Pen, Maiden Lane, Covent Garden."

So much for nostrums which were honoured with the sanction of the faculty a century and a half ago. They have carried us temporarily out of the course in which we originally started, and which we shall now resume, by closing the present chapter with some references to the old method of forestalling small-pox by means of inoculation. To gain some notion of the power of this loathsome disease in the days of George II., we need go no further back than the letters of Horace Walpole. Writing to Sir Horace Mann, on the 2nd of April, 1750, he tells him that Francis Scott, Lord Dalkeith, eldest son of the then Duke of Buccleuch, was "dead of the small-pox in three days. It is so dreadfully fatal in his family," he continues, "that, besides several uncles and aunts, his eldest boy died of it last year." Lord Dalkeith's "only brother, who was ill but two days, putrefied so fast, *that his*

*limbs fell off, as they lifted the body into the coffin."*

The ravages which this fell disease committed less than ninety years ago can scarcely be conceived in these vaccination days. It was an enemy almost as far-reaching, and even more insidious, than the plague. It was a disease which was strictly impartial in its visitation, carrying off the rich and the poor, the aristocratic and the humble, without the slightest respect of persons or the elegance of their surroundings. A family blighted in its fairest hopes through this terrible visitation was an everyday spectacle; the imperial house of Austria alone lost eleven of its members by its ravages in the course of fifty years.

The practice of inoculation was introduced into this country by Mr. Maitland, who had been attached to the embassy of Mr. Edward Wortley Montagu to Turkey in a medical capacity, his endeavours being encouraged by the celebrated Lady Mary, wife of the ambassador, who took up the

practice with the greatest enthusiasm. It received the sanction of the king and queen, whose children were inoculated with success, the example being followed by some of the nobility and the more enlightened of the people. It made, however, as might have been expected, very slow progress amongst the masses, who found themselves hampered with two intellectual difficulties—the difficulty of understanding how any medical lesson worth the learning could be taught by the old women of the East, and of ascertaining what earthly purpose was to be served by *securing* the attack of a disease whose attacks you were anxious by all manner of means to avoid. A hospital for inoculation was suggested, and a small establishment set on foot by a Dr. Poole, which, from the fact of its being considered a “pest house,” was shifted to different localities before it obtained a permanent establishment. It found at one time a settlement at a house in Old Street Road, which some years

ago was still standing with its original stone sign of the "Swan Tavern," in Stock's Market, and bearing the date of 1668. It was afterwards removed to the back of Cavendish Square, but occasioned so much alarm to the neighbourhood that it was found necessary again to transfer it to a greater distance; and Dr. Archer, who was for forty-two years its physician, found it in the fields at Islington, with twelve beds, *three patients*, and a large debt. As it increased, the matron received £7 and the nurses £6 per annum, but it was fourteen years before the establishment was sufficiently prosperous to give its physician any remuneration at all.

After a time there sprang up a class of practitioners who devoted themselves wholly to the practice of inoculation. Of these the Suttons and the Dimsdales were the principal; and whole families took solemn leave of their friends, and left their homes to undergo a discipline and training

for inoculation under their hands. They treated their patients after the manner recommended by Mead and other learned physicians, who had given attention to the subject of small-pox, and were, as a rule, very successful. The practice was not confined to the duly qualified surgeons. Judging by the following advertisement which we find in the *Oxford Journal* of 11th February, 1758, any cow-doctor seems to have considered himself competent to perform the operation :—

"I, GEORGE RIDLER, near Stroud, in the County of Gloster, Broadweaver, at the desire of the peepel hereabout, do give nautis, that I have *inokelated* these two seasons past, between 2 or 300 for the small-pox, and but two or three of them died ; a mainy peepel be a feard of the thing, but exaith it is no more than srattin a bit of a haul in their yarm, a pushin in a piece of skraped rag dipt in sum of the pocky matter of a child under the distemper. That everybody in the nation may be served, I will, God willin, undertake to *inokellat* them with the pervizer they will take the purges beforehand, and loose a little blud away, for *half a crown* a head, and I will be bould to say, noo body goes beyond me.

"N.B.—Poor volk at a shillin a head, *but all must pay for the purgin.*"

What with his phonetic spelling, his "pervizer," and his "nautis," his bleeding and his "purgin," to



say nothing of the deep mystery involved in his outlandish *patois*, we doubt not that George Ridler made a good thing by his practice of "inokelation."

It is noteworthy that Sir Richard Blackmore, and Mr. Tanner, surgeon to St. Thomas's Hospital, distinguished themselves by their opposition to *inoculation*. They maintained that the preventive power of inoculation was contrary both to reason and experience, and that more deaths occurred after the operation than from the disease when taken in its ordinary course. This statement—as we shall presently see—is a true one, although the grounds on which they seem to have formed their conclusion are not given. The opponents of inoculation found vigorous allies in the clergy, more especially of the Nonconformist persuasion. The reverend gentlemen regarded inoculation as a *crime*. They asserted that it was small-pox with which Job was afflicted, that the devil was the inoculator, and they founded on this preposterous argument the no less

monstrous conclusion, that it was impious to attempt to *alleviate* or remove *any of the disorders which are sent from God to afflict mankind*—an argument which, if it means anything at all, amounts, of course, to the impious assertion that God is a God of vengeance, and not a God of mercy and compassion. There are clergymen and spiritual teachers of this kind at the present time, but their narrow-minded prejudices find an exit in channels into which it would be inexpedient and unnecessary *in this place* to follow them.

Leaving these stupid folk out of the question, the advantages of *inoculation* were calculated by more sensible and matter-of-fact people in this way: If one in seven die of small-pox\* taken in the natural way, and one in three hundred and twelve by inoculation (which was asserted to be the experience), then, as one million divided by seven gives 142,857 $\frac{1}{7}$ , one million divided by 312 gives 3,205 $\frac{40}{312}$ ,

\* Sir Thomas Watson fixes the number as "one in five."

the advantage gained in one million of patients being  $139,652\frac{32}{2184}$ , who but for inoculation must have died the victims of a peculiarly loathsome malady.

But inoculation, in truth, had a very ugly feature and this we shall describe in the words of Sir Thomas Watson: "The true value of inoculation, upon the whole, cannot even be considered equivocal. To all individuals doomed to have the small-pox its advantages were indeed great and obvious; to the community at large it was a grievous evil. By carrying the virus and the disease into every village throughout the length and breadth of the land, the practice of inoculation multiplied the *foci* and enlarged the sphere of contagion, insured the disease to all who were subjected to the operation, and diminished to all who were not the chance of escaping it. In truth, the total mortality was greatly increased by the process.†

† "Small-pox and Compulsory Vaccination," in *Nineteenth Century*, June 1878.

Jenner's priceless discovery placed the chance of *catching* small-pox on a par with the chance of *dying after* inoculation. Previous to 1826 the average of deaths by small-pox annually within the Bills of Mortality was never less than 4,000; the total in that year was 503; and since Jenner's discovery, the disease as an epidemic has practically disappeared from among us. Yet in the face of this experience, and because some persons have died in consequence of the unsoundness of their constitutions, or even from some impure vaccine matter, because experience proves that vaccination holds its preservative powers for a limited number of years, and requires to be renewed after a time, many persons have jumped to the conclusion that the whole system of vaccination is founded on a dangerous mistake. The preventive for any unfortunate result has been found, by taking (as in Belgium) the vaccine from a vaccinated calf,—a practice which Sir Thomas Watson, in the article

from which we have quoted, strongly recommends; but if ten, twenty, one hundred persons were to die in consequence of vaccination from the human subject, better that these should perish, than that ten thousand victims should be swept away. Leicester seems to have distinguished itself so vigorously in its opposition to compulsory vaccination, that the law there cannot be enforced. What the ultimate result will be remains to be seen. It is possible that when the next outbreak of small-pox happens, the Leicester objectors (who are probably uneducated folk) may sing a very different and a very doleful tune.

## CHAPTER VII.

### FALSE PRETENCES.

WE have seen it somewhere stated, that the only difference which separated the old physician from the quack was the fact, that the former wore a round velvet cap and doctor's gown, and knew a little Latin. It is scarcely worth while to contradict an assertion which bears on its face the evidence of its own absurdity. We have seen that the old physician was an accomplished scholar; and that his professional learning was great, judged, that is to say, by the standard of the professional knowledge of his day. Although he brought to his aid a number of superstitious and absurd remedies, and entertained some odd notions on the subject of

natural history, and the properties of metals and precious stones, it must not be inferred that he knew nothing of the art of healing. If you look into his books, you will find that he knew *something*, although his knowledge weighed in the practical balances of to-day would amount to nothing. Between him and the quack, however, there was this difference: that the one was a learned scholar and a gentleman, whilst the latter was distinguished by three prime qualities which mark his individuality at the present day,—his dangerous ignorance—his brazen impudence—and his knowledge of the credulity of the weak people who resorted to him for advice.

Quacks and empirics are oftentimes classed together, and it appears to us wrongly. A quack is necessarily an empiric; but, on the other hand, the converse by no means follows, that an empiric is necessarily a quack. Let us consider the meaning of each term separately. Johnson gives the

following definition of the word *quack*: (1) "A boastful pretender to arts he *does not understand*;" (2) "A vain boastful *pretender* to physic; one who proclaims his own medical abilities in public places;" and (3) "An artful tricking practitioner in physic." *Empiric*, on the other hand, is defined to be, "A trier; *an experimenter*; such persons as have no true education in, or knowledge of, physical practice, but venture upon hearsay and observation only." The different meanings are separated by the semicolon; but there is an adjective derived from the noun, which still further qualifies its import. "Empiric" as an adjective, means (1) "*versed in experiments*"; and (2) "*known only by experience*"; practised only by rote, without rational grounds." Dr. Nathaniel Hodges, in his *Vindiciæ Medicinæ* (1666), gives us the following excellent definition of an "Empiric":—"I style him an emperick, who without consideration of any rational method undertakes to cure diseases, whose



frequent periclitations [*experiments*] (as he conceits) surpass the notional theory of physic, and his proof of receipts seem to him more satisfactory than the scholastic odd rules of practice." It will be seen by the foregoing, that, while a quack is an *empiric* inasmuch as he tries experiments, an empiric is by no means necessarily a quack. We have heard a physician of high standing, for instance, described as an empiric by his professional brethren, because they credited him with experiments which they said were unsanctioned by medical practice; and yet this renowned gentleman as well as his detractors would have been amused, and the former by no means offended had you styled him a quack. Without *experiment*, the truth cannot be known; and there was a time, be it remembered, when Harvey, Sydenham, and Jenner were considered, by the prejudiced physicians of their day, *empirics* pure and simple.

The law always looked askant at the impudent

knave who practised as a physician on false pretences, although it seems to have interfered with him only spasmodically and at rare intervals. Among the records of sentences passed in the reign of Edward III., or Richard II., the "Liber Albus" records that "Judgment [was pronounced] upon a person pretending to be a physician;" and in the year 1426 (reign of Henry VI.) the head of a quack, or counterfeit physician, was set on the Tower of London.

We referred in our first chapter to the statute passed in the third year of the reign of Henry VIII. [cap. 11], 1511, for the suppression of quack practitioners in physic and surgery; and we also showed how, in 1542, it became necessary to rend in pieces the net which the statute had woven, for the purpose of emancipating the many persons who were not intended to be affected by its provisions. The net was found so large and comprehensive, that it took in, not only the sharks, but those

good and worthy folk who employed the slight knowledge they possessed in simples, in ministering to the relief of the sick poor from pure motives of charity. When the door was opened by the second statutory key, it let out, as might have been expected, the good and bad alike. The result may be seen from a curious statement made by Thomas Gale, chyrurgeon in the army of Henry VIII., which invaded France in 1544. "I remember," he says, "when I was at the wars of Montreul, in the time of the most famous King Henry VIII., there was a great rabblement that took upon them the practice of chyrurgery, such as tinkers, . . . shoe-menders," and men of still more degraded callings. The result, of course, may be imagined. "When the Duke of Norfolk, who was the general, understood how the people died of inconsiderable wounds, he sent for me, and certain other chyrurgeons, requiring me . . . to search how these men came by their death; whether

it were by the grievousness of their wounds, or through want of knowledge in the undertakers. According to his command, we made search throughout the camp, and found many of these good fellows who took upon them the title of chyrurgeons; not only so, but the salary also. We enquired with whom they had been brought up [trained], and they shamelessly would answer, with some skilful person or other, who was dead some time ago. We further demanded to see what medicines they had to cure the wounded; and they *would readily show us a pot or box*, which they had in a budget, wherein was such trumpery as was only fit to grease horse heels withal; other, who were cobblers and tinkers made use of *shoemakers' wax*, and *the rust of old pans*, wherewith they compounded a *noble salve*, as they termed it." Instead of hanging these wretches, or some of them, off-hand, after the summary fashion of those days, they were committed to the marshal of the

camp, and threatened to be hung "unless they spoke the truth." Probably their number was so large that their punishment would have taken the form of a massacre; at any rate, in the end they seem to have been discharged, on pledging their words that they would avoid "the camp upon pain of death;" and they were told that if "they appeared there again, they would be hanged as murderers."

Gale further tells us that, "in the year 1562, I did see in the two hospitals of London, called St. Thomas's Hospital and St. Bartholomew's Hospital, to the number CCC and odd poor people, that were diseased of sore legs, sore arms, feet, and hands, with other parts of the body so grievously infected, that one hundred and twenty of them could never be recovered without loss of a leg or arm, a foot or hand, fingers or toes, or else their limbs crooked, so that they were either maimed or else undone for ever. All these were

brought to their mischief by witches, by women, and by counterfeit javils [worthless fellows], that take upon them to use the art [of chirurgery]; not only robbing them of their money, but of their limbs and perpetual health. And I, with some others, diligently examining these poor people how they came by their grievous hurts, and who were their chyrurgeons who looked unto them; they confessed that they were either witches, which did promise by charms to make them whole, or else some women that were to cure them with herbs, and such like things, or some vagabond javil, that runneth from one country to another, promising unto them health, and deceiving them of their money." Such was practically the effect of re-opening the door which had been closed by the previous statute. Quackery has always been found a profitable employment, because it requires no capital either in the shape of knowledge or money: the result was that "this unprofitable company [of

quacks] have so increased in this city, that all the countries in England have taken notice thereof; yea, and at this day all the countries in Christendom may wonder at our laws, in suffering and maintaining of them."

The foregoing affords a short but sufficiently curious picture of the state of quackery in London from the reign of Henry VIII. to that of Elizabeth. The way in which these dangerous and ignorant pretenders carried on the game in the country, will be sufficiently shown by a few sketches which we have selected from "An Expostulation against the Abuses of Chyrurgrie and Physicke," written by "John Halle, Chyrurgen," in 1565. Hall practised at Maidstone; and his exposures principally refer to the "javells," by whom that town was visited in his own experience. The following is the advertisement of a fellow named Thomas Lufkin, a fuller by trade, who came to Maidstone in 1558; we have modernised the spelling of the original :—

“If any man, woman, or child be sick, or would be let blood, or be diseased with any manner of inward or outward griefs, as all manner of agues, or fevers, pleurisies, colic, stone, strangullion, imposthumes, pustules, kanker, gout, bone-ache, and pain of the joints, which cometh for lack of blood-letting, let them resort to the sign of the Saracen’s Head, in the East Lane and bring . . . \* and they shall have remedy. By me Thomas Lufkin.”

A quack appeared at Staplehurst, in the Weald of Kent, in 1560. His name was Valentine, but he assumed that of Wingfield, giving out that he was the “son of a worshipful knight of that name. He professed to tell all things past, present, and future, the very thoughts of men, and their diseases by simply studying their faces. This man, who professed to cure diseases by the aid of the devil, had of course great success; but in time [the people] found him out; and the first they

\* The reader will have no difficulty in supplying the *hiatus*.



found [out] about him was, that he had three wives living in different places" about the country. He got his deserts in the shape of a good whipping and imprisonment as an impostor. Although this man could not read—an accomplishment rather than a necessary acquirement in those days—he professed nevertheless to speak Latin, Greek, and Hebrew.

Another fellow, who came to the town in 1562, gave himself out to be a profound physician, and to cure every disease that flesh is heir to. The place being greatly infested by these dangerous pretenders, Hall caused him to be arrested and carried before a justice. In answer to questions put to him, he said his name was John Bewley; he lived in the Old Bailey, London, opposite to Sir Robert Charnley. When asked if he was a physician, he answered "Yea." How and where did he learn the art? He said, "By his own study." In answer to the question, what medical authors

he had read? he said in an airy, off-hand way, "Elliot and others." When asked to define "*what others?*" he owned "he had forgotten." On the question being put to him, what were the titles of Elliot's books? he said he could not remember. When a practical test in the shape of an English book was brought to him to read, he refused to do so; but on being ordered by the bench to read, he desired his examiners "to be good to him, for he was a poor man, and could not read at all; he did not intend," he said, "to tarry at Maidstone, but to return home." Finally, they let the frightened rascal go (as we should say in modern police phraseology), "with a caution," which took the form of an exhortation, "to leave such false and naughty deceits and be gone."

The worthy John Hall would seem to have been a veritable thorn in the side of these illiterate fellows who, in an ignorant age, and amongst a densely ignorant population, must have sadly interfered

with the practice of the qualified chyrurgeon. Hall used to keep a very vigilant watch on their movements; often causing them to be arrested and expelled from the town, after passing through a regular examination of fitness, conducted, as it would appear, by himself.

The metropolitan authorities probably seldom, if ever, interfered, unless their assistance was invoked by the physicians or surgeons; and rarely, as it would seem, even then. In the reign however of James I., authority was given to all magistrates to arrest all reputed quacks, with other offenders of that nature, and bring them before the Censors of the College. The king also seems to have bestirred himself, and sent letters to the same effect to the Lord Mayor.

Sir Edward Coke (4th Instit. 251) says, "If one that is of the mystery of a physician, takes a man in cure, and giveth him such physic as within three days he die thereof, *without any felonious*

*intent*, and against his will, it is no homicide;" whereas (citing Britton), if one that is *not* of the mystery of a physician or chyrurgeon take "upon him the cure of a man, and he dieth of the potion or medicine, this is covert felony:" while Sergeant Hawkins, in his first book of the "Pleas of the Crown," pronounces it to be manslaughter at least, if it be not murder.

Chief among the *empirics*, as distinguished from the ordinary vulgar *quacks*, were the professors of alchemy—the forerunner of chemistry. They combined astrology with alchemy, "casting nativities," and professing to tell future events by the aid of the stars. Astrology was part of the regular professional training of the old physician; hence the claim laid by the astrologer quack, Lilly, and his contemporaries, to *diagnose* [discover the nature of a] disease, and to predict its issue by means of his "figures." The alchemists include amongst their ranks the distinguished names of Paracelsus, Ray-

mond Lully, John Rodôlph Glauber, Friar Bacon, Jean Baptist van Helmont, Albertus Magnus, Basil Valentine, and a host of others; but a large proportion of the English alchemists of the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. were quacks pure and simple. In addition to their *elixirs*, they sold so-called preservatives ~~for~~ the complexion—such as the “oil of talc,” or a deleterious compound which supplied to our ancestresses the place which the comparatively harmless *rouge* takes on the toilette tables of their female descendants, and which was known under the general name of *fucus*. The *modus operandi* of these learned professors has been described by one who made it his special business to detect and expose the fallacy of their pretensions:—

“ . . . as put the case,

That some great man in state, he have the gout,  
 Why, you but send three drops of your *elixir*,  
 You help him straight: there you have made a friend.  
 Another has the palsie, or the dropsie,  
 He takes of your incombustible stuff,  
 He's young again: there you have made a friend.

A lady that is past the feat of body,  
 The' not of mind, and hath her face decay'd  
 Beyond all cure of paintings, you restore,  
 With the *oil of talc* :\* there you have made a friend ;  
 And all her friends. A lord that is a leper,  
 A knight that has the bone-ache, or a squire  
 That hath both these you make 'em smooth and sound,  
 With a bare fricace of your medicine : still  
 You increase your friends." †

Of the quacks of the plague-year 1665, Defoe gives us a very vivid description, derived undoubtedly from the recollections of his father, and of those of his friends who remembered the visitation. He tells us how the posts of houses and the corners of streets were plastered with their bills announcing, "Infallible Preventive Pills against the plague; never-failing preservatives against the Infection; Sovereign Cordials against the corruption of the Air . . ; Anti-pestilential Pills . . . ; the Royal antidote against all kinds of infection," and so on.

\* According to Fuller ("Worthies"), talc "being calcined and variously prepared, it maketh a curious *white-wash*, which some justify lawful, because clearing, not changing [*i.e.*, *painting*] the complexion."

† Ben Jonson, *Alchemist*, Act iii., Sc. 2.\*

Then he gives us the announcements of the illustrious professors themselves, "the eminent High Dutch Physician," from Holland; the "Italian Gentlewoman, just arrived from Naples;" "the ancient gentlewoman," who gave "her advice only to the female sex;" and the "Experienc'd Physician," who had devoted himself to the study of what he is pleased to term "the doctrine of antidotes." All these ignorant and impudent swindlers professed to have had special experience in cases of plague infection in foreign countries. One fellow "would pawn his life" (worthless as it was), that if the public took his "preparation," "they should never have the plague, no, though they lived in the house with people that were infected." Every one of these rascals soon disappeared; some supposed "they were all swept away in the infection to a man;" but Defoe imagines, with far greater probability, that "they fled into the country, and tryed<sup>d</sup> their practices upon the

people there," who lived in daily apprehension of the infection. Quacks and mountebanks were conspicuous by their absence during the two years that followed. A work called "The Accomplisht Physician" shows us, however, that they had resumed practice, and were busy at their deplorable work four years afterwards. One practitioner in the Strand gave, the author tells us, three children as many doses of *Mercurius dulcis* for worms, and killed the children [not the worms]. Another administered to a patient twenty grains of *Extractum Rudii*, which sent him next day to his grave. Another in the Old Bailey administered *collyrium* "to eat away a pearl in the eye," and thereby destroyed the sight of both. Another for a "looseness or diarrhea" prescribed *Crocus Martius* and *opium*, and brought on a "malignant fever;" while another treated an ancient woman for dropsy, with an effect which may be imagined, and which we forbear to describe. Most of these fellows were



practising as *doctors*, under a license from the ecclesiastical authorities,—a license which the latter regularly granted, whether they had or had not any legal power to do so. The author of the work from which we last quoted complains with great justice, that the legislature did not interfere to restrain the practice of conferring the honour and title of *doctor* upon every quack, empiric, surgeon, apothecary, “and almost every one that carries but the scent of mithridate about him.” But the practice went on, nevertheless, right into the middle of the eighteenth century. “Have not our bishops and their officials,” asks the writer of the “Ill State of Physic in Great Britain” [1727], “a power, (tho’ the legality of it, since the Reformation . . . is questionable . . .), and do they not grant licenses to such great numbers of gentlemen that are bred abroad, and settle so frequently in our greatest cities and towns, that there is scarce room for a regular physician from one of our own

universities to thrust in amongst them? and to abundance of meer formalists, and *what is worse*, to many ignorant and illiterate persons besides, and that without due examination and necessary tryal before competent judges, who ought very well to approve every one that offers himself to them for a qualification to exercise the faculty of physick even in the most servile and minutest part thereof. It is notorious," he says, "that the officers of their courts, for the sake of perquisites, are ready solicitors for this tribe of candidates." The regular physicians lent themselves to the practice, signing certificates for many humble petitioners,\* under the supposition that they could not interfere with themselves, or it may be to oblige some patients of rank and influence, who were anxious to provide a living for some "poor person, that otherwise had not wherewithal to support his

\* It appears that the spiritual courts would license none without testimonial from members of the College.

family." It is noteworthy that the ecclesiastical privilege to which we refer is recognised by "the medical act" of 1858, among the thirteen classes of persons entitled to be placed upon the registers being those possessed of the qualification of "doctor of medicine by doctorate granted, prior to the passing of the act, by the Archbishop of Canterbury."

William Lilly, almanack compiler, astrologer, and quack-doctor [1602—1681], was a very triton amongst minnows. He believed not only in the truth of the so-called art which he practised with singularly good fortune, but—strange to say—in his own integrity. He had, however, some excuse for this belief, being courted, trusted, and richly rewarded by noble and crowned heads at home and abroad. The grant of his license to practise physic was obtained for him by no less a person than Elias Ashmole, who relates the fact in his diary: "I this day mov'd my Lord Archbishop of

Canterbury for a license for Mr. Lilly, the astrologer, to practise physic, which he granted."

We have no time nor is this the place to go into the details of Lilly's personal history: biography, indeed, would be foreign to the plan and purposes of this book. Among those thrown into temporary contact with him, we notice the name of one lady, afterwards destined to attain a melancholy celebrity in history. Sir Bulstrode Whitelocke being ill, Alice, the wife of his friend John Lisle, was sent to him with the usual bottle, to enable the learned licentiate of the Archbishop to form his astrological opinion with reference to the *event* of the sickness. Lilly himself tells us that, "having set his figure," he returned for answer that "the sick would recover, but would dangerously relapse in consequence of a surfeit within a month," — a safe prediction, on the whole, to make, whether by "figure" or otherwise. A relapse having

actually happened, Lilly went daily to visit him, and the sick man was fortunate enough to recover in spite of him. This "Mrs. Lisle," when a widow, was afterwards known as "Dame Alice Lisle," and became the most memorable martyr at Judge Jeffreys' bloody Western Assize, after the calamity which befell Monmouth's unfortunate followers at Sedgemoor.

The astrologers of the Lilly school were spiritualists, although their pretensions were not so extensive as those of the late Douglas Home and other modern impostors who hail from America. They had their favourite angels whose assistance they were accustomed to invoke, such as Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, and the like. One of Lilly's disciples was a certain Sir George Peckham, Knight. Lilly taught him "that part [of astrology] which concerns sickness," and says that he made such progress that after two or three months' study "he would give a very true discovery [*diagnosis*]

of any disease only by his figures." Peckham, who practised at Nottingham, was a devout Catholic, and this reminds us of a story. Richard F. Clarke, an English nineteenth century Catholic, possessing a method of reasoning which would do credit to the intellectual powers of Philip II. of Spain, speaks in the enthusiastic terms which a person of his mental calibre alone would use of the virtues of St. Winifred's Well, in North Wales. The inquirer into its efficacy, says our erudite informant, "will learn from the most intelligent (?) of the Catholic residents that they have every reason to believe that the Saint's miraculous power goes on working wonders up to the present time; he will gather from the lips of the Protestant inhabitants that they themselves believe in the curative powers of the well, though they attempt to explain it by the *feeble hypothesis* of the tonic properties of the water, or else, more prudently, are content with the fact; and confess their ignorance of the means

which produce it." Peckham (a worthy predecessor of this enlightened writer) being out of sorts, resorted, like a good Catholic, to the waters of St. Winifred; but the Saint, alas! proved unpropitious. Possibly she resented the astrological pretensions of her suppliant. Lilly, at any rate, tells us that he remained so long in the blessed waters "mumbling his *pater nosters* and *Santa Winifreda, ora pro me*, that the cold struck into his body; and after his coming forth of that well [he] never spoke more." Lilly himself died 9th of June, 1681, and was buried next day in the chancel of Walton Church. He figures as the *Sidrophel* of Butler's *Hudibras*:—

"Quoth Ralph, not far from hence doth dwell,  
A cunning man, hight *Sidrophel*,  
That deals in destiny's dark counsels,  
And sage opinions of the moon sells;  
To whom all people far and near,  
On deep importances repair."\*

He left behind him works of great interest in

\* Pt. ii., c. 3.

the history of astrology ; while his "Life" is an important contribution to the chronicles of the times in which he lived, and of the doings of the memorable personages who permitted him to associate with them on terms of familiarity.

Although Lilly was the last of the astrologers, the names of three sordid knaves remain to be mentioned, because they traded on his name, pretended even to be his successors, and managed to hoist themselves into notoriety, although of rather unenviable character. The first of these was Tom Saffold. This fellow belonged to the class from which the ranks of vulgar quackery are invariably recruited. He had been a weaver by trade ; and received his license to practise as a doctor of physic from the Bishop of London on the 4th of September, 1674. He had been nine years "in practice," therefore, at the time of the Rye House plot ; and witnessed probably the judicial murders

Lord Russell, Colonel Sydney, and Sir Thomas



Armstrong, the drunken howlings of my Lord Chief Justice at the King's Bench or the Old Bailey— beheld, it may be, the rabble rout which accompanied that worthy chancellor, when the train bands conveyed him at his shrieking entreaty to the Tower of London for safety. The poet, we know, "is born not made;" and the same observation holds good of the rhymers; and this coarse knave, the originator of the jingling quack advertisements of our day, was born with the fatal gift of doggerel. Here is a specimen of his "style":—

"Tom Saffold's Pills, much better than the rest,  
Deservedly have gain'd the name of best;  
Each box has eighteen pills for eighteen-pence,  
Which is too cheap in any man's own sense."

We find one of the bills of this "undergraduate in physic," as he sometimes styled himself, among the Harleian MSS. and papers [No 5946]: we may be pardoned therefore, if we give a short abstract of this work of art:—

"Thomas Saffold, an approved and licensed

physician and student in astrology, still lives at the *Black Ball* and *Lilly's Head* next door to the *Feather-Shops*, that are within Black Fryers Gateway, which is over against Ludgate church, just by Ludgate, in London, who resolves these questions following, viz." Here follows a long string of mysteries (none of which are of a medical character), which the genius professes to solve, expressed in an English, the like of which no reader (scholar or otherwise) has ever seen. "He doth very seldom or never fail to give to any person diseased a true account of the nature of any disease afflicting and part afflicted: and if curable, or not, and if not curable, he will not take them in hand." Next follows another detachment of questions, which, "*and all other lawful questions he resolveth according to the rules of astrology, and twenty-four years' experience. Lastly,\* he calculateth nativities, and teacheth the whole art of astrology.*"

\* The italics are Saffold's.

"*The sick may have advice for nothing.* And of him good medicines cheap, with directions how to use them, by which and God's assistance, he is able to cure any disease, either inward or outward, or what name or nature soever, if curable." Here follows a description of the fellow's nostrums, and the diseases for which they are infallible remedies. The learned physician "is to be spoken with from 8 in the morning till 10 at night. A private lodging may be had if desired." "Beware," he says, with a gravity, which shows the importance of the caution, "beware you do not mistake his house, as some have done, another living near him pretending to be the same. His *Cordial Elixir* is half-a-crown the half-pint bottle, with directions in print how to take it, or his best *pills* and *diet drink* :—

\* 'He knows some who are knaves in grain,  
And have more gall and spleen than brain.  
Will ill reward his skill and pain.'

He hath practised astrology above twenty-four

years, and hath had the Bishop of London's license to practise physic, ever since the 4th day of September, 1674, and hath, he thanks God for it, great experience and wonderful success in both those arts, giving to doubtful people great satisfaction, and, by God's blessing, cureth the sick of any age or sex of any distemper, though given over by others, and never so bad (if curable); therefore, let none despair of a cure, but try him."

To those "conceited fools," who inquire "how he came to be able to do such great cures, and to foretell such great things, and to know how to make such rare and powerful medicines, as his best *pills*, *elixir*, and *dies drinks* are, and wherefore he doth publish the same in print? he will answer such dark animals thus:

" 'It hath so pleased God, the King of Heaven,  
Being He to him hath knowledge given,  
And in him there can be no greater sin,  
Than to hide his talents in a napkin:  
His candle is light, and he will not under  
A bushel put it, let the world wonder:  
Though He be traduced by such like tools,  
As have knaves' hearts; lack brains, are fools.' "

With this characteristic war-dance, the "approved and licensed physician," Tom Saffold will shuffle off our stage. He died 12th May, 1691, and was succeeded in his dwelling and practice by his contemporary, "Dr. Case," who also directed his advertisements from "the Black Ball and Lilly's Head." Of this fellow it will be sufficient to say, that he was (so to speak) the counterpart of his predecessor; that he gilded Saffold's sign of the "Black Ball;" and gave his sorrowing dupes to understand that,

"At the Golden Ball and Lillie's Head,"  
John Case [yet] lives, though Saffold's dead."

The last of the so-called astrologer quacks to be mentioned, and he deserves by virtue of his historical associations a place to himself, is John Partridge. Wherever the satire of Dean Swift is read, the name of this arrant and stupid impostor is ludicrously but inseparably associated with it. His real name was Hewson; he was born at Richmond,

in Surrey, on the 18th January, 1644, and was consequently sixteen years of age at the time of the restoration of Charles II. When, after infinite pains, he had learnt to read and eke to scrawl, his friends bound him apprentice to a shoemaker, which respectable trade he followed down to the year 1679. Two years after this date, under the authority of the usual ecclesiastical license, we find the ex-shoemaker not only a "physician," but styling himself on the title-page of one of his almanacks, "Physician to his Majesty." These almanacks eventually got their compiler into difficulties in King James's time. Their tone was deemed so anti-papal that England became too hot for him; and Hewson, *alias* Partridge, fled to Holland, returning to England at the revolution, when he married the widow of a gentleman who had formerly been tutor to the ill-advised Duke of Monmouth.

Men of the intellectual calibre of Hewson, *alias*

Partridge, are usually distinguished by a rhinocerostic consistency of hide. This Swift well knew, and it was only by descending (as he seemed to do) to the level of his contemptible victim, that he managed to send his dart so thoroughly home. The Dean's sham "Predictions for the year 1708," in which he foretold (amongst other remarkable things) the death of Partridge himself, on the 29th of March following, attracted the attention of the Portuguese Holy Office, and with that intelligent acumen which so greatly distinguished the members of the Inquisition, they gravely condemned such "Predictions" to the flames. By an odd coincidence, too, the company of stationers obtained in 1709 an injunction against any almanack published under the name of John Partridge, as if the wretched shoemaker had died in downright earnest. It is a singular circumstance, in its way, that Partridge died on the 24th of June, 1715—the year when the Scottish clans had risen in favour of the Old Pre-

tender, the unworthy son of James II.—and Swift, on the 19th of October, 1745—when they had risen in support of the gallant Prince Charles Edward Stuart, his grandson. The shoemaker went down to his grave in peace, with his witless wits unclouded; while the brilliant brain of his intellectual antagonist was quenched in the impenetrable darkness of idiocy. Thirty years before that hopeless goal had been reached, the hapless wit had penned the following epitaph upon the shoemaker “astrologer” :—

“ Here, five feet deep, lies on his back,  
A cobbler, star-monger, and quack :  
Who to the stars in pure good-will,  
Does to his best look upward still.  
Weep all you customers that use  
His pills, his almanacks, or shoes;  
And you that did your fortunes seek,  
Step to his grave but once a week :  
This earth which bears his body's print,  
You'll find has so much virtue in't,  
That I durst pawn my ears, 'twill tell,  
Whate'er concerns you, full as well,  
In physie, stolen goods, or love,  
As he himself could, when above.”

There were other shining lights besides Tom



Saffold, Case, and Partridge, as hundreds of their advertisements in the Museum show, but the smaller fry fall into insignificance by the side of these "representative men," although certainly not into the obscurity in which the "representative men" themselves fall, in comparison with their greater predecessor, *Sidrophel*. Sidrophel, in fact, stood to them in the relative position which Charles I. occupied with reference to one of his scullions. Their career teaches us, however, a moral: that while *honest* men—men of genius, ability, and learning—lived, some of them in poverty, hunger, and neglect, these sordid fellows, clumsy professors of the "mystery" of humbug, accumulated large fortunes and lived "sumptuously every day." It has been well said that Case, by his simple distich, "Within this place Lives Dr. Case," made more money than John Dryden did by all the efforts of his brilliant genius.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### HOGARTH AND THE QUACKS OF HIS TIME.

IF Time would allow us to retrace our steps a couple of hundred years, if we might be permitted to enter the Exchange at the commencement of the eighteenth century, we should find the pillars and the wainscoting of that place of mercantile resort covered with advertisements devoted principally to the use of the immediate successors of Tom Saffold and his disciples. Every quack in London had his lacquered frame, in which his name, address, medical and surgical pretensions and remedies, were duly displayed and recorded. Town and country were traversed by a class of

quack practitioners, who after a time disappeared from the face of England. The members of this fraternity made their journeys on horseback, or rather, on old, broken-winded Rosinantes, from which they addressed the gaping multitude. A quack of this kind was known as a "horse mountebank." From the saddle he descanted on the beneficent effects of a pill which would carry off a distemper with every operation. He had a plaister good for green wounds, old fistulas, and ulcers, pains and aches in the head, limbs, or elsewhere, as well as a sovereign remedy for contusions, tumours, or king's evil, sprains, fractures, dislocations, or hurts inflicted either by sword, cane, or gun-shot; knife, saw, or hatchet; hammer, nail, or tenter hook; fire, blast, or gunpowder. He had an admirable powder or antidote against infection—a cordial which, while it strengthened the heart and promoted appetite, proved also a sovereign remedy against worms, as well as a delightful dentifrice

Last, though by no means least, there was his *orvietan*, an antidote against the rankest poison, a sudorific in all cases of catarrh or fever, the secret of which the College of Physicians had vainly tried to purchase from him, at the price of admitting him a member of that august corporation.

The drowsy atmosphere of a provincial town was sometimes stirred by the arrival of a much more distinguished personage. He made his entry in a coach and four, attended by a party of stalwart servants, mounted upon Smithfield hacks, and armed with musketoon and blunderbuss, to defend the person of their august master and the side-board of plate, with which he invariably travelled, from the skulking highwaymen who infested the commons contiguous to the roads. The common people flocked round the new arrival, and gazed with wonder and admiration at his gorgeous equipage. It was soon known that the occupant

of the coach—a pleasing-looking and well-dressed gentleman, was the “oculist in ordinary” to her Majesty the Queen. The bells rang out a merry peal; patients flocked to him from every quarter—some with prayers on their lips, others with money in their hands: as a rule, however, his worship was so fatigued with his journey that none were admitted except those that presented a golden ticket. Refreshed with sleep, the distinguished chyrurgeon paid a formal visit to the mayor; but whatever he did was done for effect and with a clearly defined and calculated purpose. His table was public to all the men of local influence in the town; and if he dined alone and on the plainest fare, he was waited on by his attendants with more than the state and ceremony of a titled personage. The whole thing was a comedy,—a comedy which brought a handsome return to the experienced but illiterate comedian. As the money flowed in easily, so he seemed to spend it, freely. He sent a crown

to the ringers, ordered a barrel of beer to be broached for the poor; and by such means acquired a popularity which paid him better than all the puffs in the newspapers. The servants were assigned their parts in the performance. It was their business to sit in the public kitchen—the coffee-room of the period, and there, after his excellency had been served, they discoursed the wondrous cures which he had performed, the golden harvest he had reaped since he had received knighthood at her Majesty's hands. One subject, however, they never referred to, and that was the mountebank's stage, the attendant Merry Andrew, the medical "properties," with which their master had commenced business long years ago. Probably they were ignorant of the fact that his worship had been at one time nothing better than a "botching tailor." So long as the fools' pence flowed in fast enough to pay expenses, and to leave such a margin of profit as he deemed equal to his merits,

the great man remained. Before the novelty, however, had ceased to draw, he took his departure for "fresh woods and pastures new," with his sideboard of plate, his coach and four, his servants, his horses, his musquetoons, and his paraphernalia.

Such a man as we have described was Sir William Read, [quack] "occulist in ordinary" to her Majesty, Queen Anne. We need not go into the details of his history: one of his early advertisements will put us in possession of all we want to know. It was issued the year of the Rye House conspiracy, and the last but one of Charles II.'s reign:—

TRIN. COLL., near DUBLIN, *March 7, 1684.*

"Though the art, experience, and reputation of Mr. William Read, practitioner in physic, chyrurgy, and a great occulist, be sufficiently known in England and Scotland; where he has long exercised his skill with very good success; yet since he

has but lately come into his Majesty's kingdom of Ireland, *and has desired our testimonial concerning his performance here*, We do certify, that he has done several remarkable cures with great dexterity and success; as the couching of cataracts, cutting off cancerated breasts, mortified arms and legs (and very little effusion of blood, *by virtue of his excellent styptic water*), several of which operations we have, with very much satisfaction, ourselves seen him perform, as we do testify under our hands and seals, the day and year above written. [Signed] Narcissus (Lord Bishop of) Ferns; And Leighlin; Robert Huntingdon, provost; Allen Mullin, M.D."

This certificate of course was drawn up by or from the dictation of Read himself: the man, his enemies said, could neither read nor write, and as for the signatures, it may be more than doubted whether any of them were genuine. Crowned



heads, however, at this time and during the two reigns which followed, were peculiarly inclined to patronise quacks, a fact which seems to show that they had no great faith in the regular professors of medicine. Read, a pushing man, an improvement, certainly, upon the general run of his class, contrived to secure the personal patronage of Queen Anne with such signal success that he received the honour of knighthood at her hands.

One of this successful charlatan's advertisements, issued at a later period, seems entitled to a place by reason of its historical associations. It made its appearance immediately after the battle of Malplaquet, fought on the 11th of September, 1709 :—

“Sir William Read, her Majesty's *oculist*, being very sensible that many of her Majesty's soldiers must have received damage in their eyes or visive faculty, in the late bloody and unparalleled battle,

thought fit to give public notice, for the benefit of all such persons, that he will constantly attend at his house in Durham Yard. Where all such persons bringing certificates from their respective officers shall be kindly received, and all due care taken in order to their speedy cure, *gratis*; as it has been his constant practice ever since the beginning of the war. *Note.*—Sir William Read couches cataracts *gratis*, to all such poor people as shall be recommended to him as fit objects of charity, such as the poor Palatines.\* He hath several to couch this month and the next, at his house aforesaid, where he has performed above one hundred such operations since Lady-day last. And any gentleman or lady shall be welcome to see that curious operation performed."

\* About the beginning of June, 1709, six or seven thousand Palatines were brought into England, recommended as great objects of charity. They proved, however, both idle and useless, and having been maintained wholly at the public expense some three months, some of them were sent back to Holland, and the rest to Ireland and the American "Plantations."

Read might have been "a botching tailor,"—an ignorant and illiterate fellow, but he was a different personage altogether from the foul school represented by Saffold and his successors. The statement that he could neither read nor write, seems *prima facie* disposed of by the fact, that he essayed to pose as a writer on diseases of the eye, although we hazard no opinion as to the value of this contribution to surgical (?) literature. One of his hand-bills in the British Museum, probably a type of most of them previous to the time he was made "Sir William," has a large pictorial heading divided into compartments, the central one representing the oculist in the act of couching a cataract. He made an excellent thing by his advertisements, and his knighthood, of course, was a mine of wealth to him. He was noted for his punch, which he served out to his visitors in golden vessels. Sir Richard Steele and Nicholas Rowe, the dramatist, visited him, and so did "Orator"

Henley; Swift, however, declined his invitation to dinner, having, as it would appear, an objection to "Garnet," and a still greater objection to "mountebanks."

He died in 1715; and the couching and cataracting business was carried on with great success, after his death, by his worthy help-meet and assistant, "the Lady Read," as she persistently advertised herself.

The town abounded with "oculists"—ignorant, dangerous, and most unscrupulous charlatans, conspicuous among the crowd being "Dr. Clark" and Mr. Roger Grant. Clark styled himself in his advertisements "physician and sworn oculist to K. Charles and K. James II." He dates his address which appears in the "British Apollo," "from his house in Old Southampton Buildings, Holbourn;" and, like "Dr. Case" had done a few years before, announces that "a golden Head" is over his door.

Roger, or "Dr. Grant," as he also styled himself,

one of the most impudent quacks of the day, is worthy of note, because he seems to have even imposed upon Steele; a "wonderful cure upon a young gentleman who was born blind," in which the fellow is styled a "surgeon," and mentioned in unquestionably high terms, forming the "subject of No. 55 of the *Tatler* (August 16, 1709). The materials for the paper were evidently supplied second-hand. Mr. Taswell, the clergyman of Newington Butts, is said to have been present with many others, and to have taken special interest in the so-called "operation." The cure of the "young gentleman" referred to is set forth in the following certificate :—

"As it would be no less disrespectful than injurious to the public, to conceal the merits of Mr. Grant, *oculist*, therefore we, the minister, churchwardens, and overseers of the poor of the parish of St. Mary, Newington Butts, do hereby certify, that

William Jones of the same parish, aged twenty years, who was born blind, on his application to Mr. Grant aforesaid, who dwells in the St. Christopher's Court, behind the Royal Exchange, by the blessing of God, on the skilful hand of Mr. Grant, the said Jones, in five minutes' time, was brought to see, and at this time hath his sight very well. This case being so particularly remarkable, and *gratisly* performed, We do, therefore, give this public testimony, under our hands, this 25th of July, 1709.

*Minister* . . . William Taswell.

*Church-Wardens* . . . { James Comber,  
William Dale.

{ Francis Trosse,

*Overseers* , William Benskin,

{ Walker Wood,

{ John Ship."

This modest advertisement was drawn up by

Grant himself, who, previously to his appearing in the character of a "surgeon" and "operator," had figured as a cobbler and Anabaptist preacher. It was inserted by him in the *Daily Courant* of 30th of July, 1709, and with the exception of those of the *overseers* (who signed the document without examination or inquiry), the signatures are every one of them forgeries.\* Mr. Taswell, the minister of the parish, asserted that he was not present at the "operation;" never heard of it till a month afterwards; and in fact never saw the impudent unscrupulous rascal in his life. The "young gentleman," William Jones, of course, was never born blind, although he had a defective vision. Notwithstanding the mode in which he was exposed, this impostor described himself (in 1710) as "sworn oculist and operator in extraordinary to her Majesty," and in 1715, "sworn oculist in

\* See "A Full and True Account of a Miraculous Cure," etc. 09), p. 8.

ordinary to his Majesty" (George I.). The business of these "oculist" swindlers began to decline after the publication which exposed Grant's frauds.

From the mass of quack advertisements which appeared at the commencement of the century, we select only one:—

"Charles Peter, surgeon, served King Charles II. in the Dutch wars. Surgeon of ye Horse Guards to King James, and surgeon of the household to King William, daily prepares his cordial Tincture and Pills, which have cured thousands of ye Collick, Stone, Gravell, Scurvie, and Dropsy, etc. Gives advice to the Poor as well as the Rich, at his house in St. Martin's Lane, near Long Acre, where he hath lived between 30 and 40 years. *Laus Deo*, 1705."

Of the three principal quacks of his time, whom Hogarth condescended to immortalise in 1736, Sally



Mapp, the "chevalier" John Taylor, and Joshua, alias "Spot" Ward, enough has been already said by Mr. Jeaffreson, and that indefatigable and amusing compiler, the late Mr. Timbs. All that is left for us to add is the fact that the satirist introduced the distinguished trio into the escutcheon of the "Company of Undertakers," in allusion to that night of October, when the vulgar virago went to the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, to patronise the performance of *The Wife's Relief*, on which occasion she sat between Taylor, the quack "oculist," on the one hand, and "Doctor" Ward (as he liked to hear himself called), the quack drysalter, on the other. The whole thing was an advertisement on the part, that is to say, of the ignoble trio, types of a class of the time—a time of which no class, whether of "soldier, churchman, patriot, men in power," was distinguished by the nobleness of its motives, the purity of its morals, or the refinement of its habits and manners. The real sting of

Hogarth's satire, lay, of course, in the fact, that he places these three vulgar quacks in the "chief" or most honourable part of the escutcheon, over the company of twelve regular members of the College thereby clearly implying that in the opinion of the satirist, at least, there was little to choose between them.

Elsewhere, the author has written of Hogarth, and of the aims he sought to accomplish by his pencil;\* but he is tempted to add something more in reference to the present subject. On the whole it may be doubted whether the artist loved either the physicians or the surgeons of his time. In that horribly realistic scene at Surgeons' Hall, which forms the last of the series of *The Four Stages of Cruelty*, and in which the butcherly operations of the dissectors are presided over by old Freiake, of Salisbury Square, a miserly and eccentric surgeon

\* "English Caricaturists and Graphic Humorists of the Nineteenth Century," p. 6, *et seq.*

of the period, it is clear that it was not his sole object to depict the final ending of an eighteenth-century ruffian, trained in the debasing and brutal surroundings of an essentially brutal time. The fellow coiling the intestines into a pail; the operator scooping out the murderous eyes; the dog licking the brutal heart which has been removed from the place it once occupied in that ignoble carcass, are details which, dreadful as they are, were not inserted by a genius such as Hogarth, without a clear and definite motive. Why should we charge the artist, whom some stupid people have described as a *caricaturist*, a designation which he himself protested against,—who depicts the men and women and manners of his time exactly as he found them, with going out of his way, so far as the chyrurgeons are concerned, to represent things as they were not? If the dog may be objected to,—the reason of its intrusion is, nevertheless, obvious. It shows that the artist had been himself in the dissecting

room at Surgeons' Hall; and that some of the doings he had witnessed there were, like other phases of manners he has recorded in his gallery of eighteenth century life, distinctly susceptible of improvement.

But the business of this chapter is not with physicians and surgeons, but with *quacks*. Hogarth takes us with him into sordid localities, and brings us face to face with the quack of George II.'s time in the midst of his work. In the third plate of *Mariage à la Mode*, we find ourselves in the consulting-room of a bow-legged, under-sized practitioner, who listens to the threats of his dissatisfied visitor with an *insouciance*, which shows he is used to "scenes," of the kind. The skull on the table—the skeletons in the cupboard,—the complicated machinery for reducing dislocations, are the clap-trap advertisements of his trade; but the barber's basin (hung high out of sight), the rows of jars and gallipots, and the nests of drawers

beneath, proclaim the sources of his medical and surgical knowledge; while the foul-mouthed harridan who dominates the meagre figure by the head and shoulders, opens her clasp-knife with a gesture which indicates she will not hesitate to make use of it if the threats are continued.

Hogarth delighted in these contrasts; witness the fat, heavy, unctuous quack and his meagre brother (in the fifth plate of the "Harlot's Progress"), who wrangle over the wretched victim of their ignorance and incapacity. Who the fat, unctuous impostor might have been we do not know, but the meagre practitioner is Misaubin, whose *pills* acquired some reputation at this time. Little, we believe, is known of him. He is mentioned in "The Man of Taste," a scathing satire printed in 1733, in a manner which seems to indicate that he enjoyed a patronage which was not confined to the class of "unfortunates," and was by some of his patients preferred

even to practitioners renowned in the field both of literature and medicine :—

“Should I perchance be fashionably ill,  
 I'll send for *Misaubin*, and take his pill.  
 I should abhor, *though in the utmost need*,  
 Arbuthnot, Hollins, Wigan, Lee, or Mead,  
 But if I found that I grew worse and worse  
 I'd turn off *Misaubin* and take a Nurse.  
 How oft when eminent physicians fail,  
 Do good old women's remedies prevail !  
 When beauty's gone, and *Chloe's* struck with years,  
 Eyes she can couch, or she can syringe ears.  
 Of graduates I dislike the learned rout,  
 And chuse a female doctor for the gout.”

The last lines, by the way, are almost a repetition of some which occur in Dryden's poem of “The Cock and the Fox.” Hogarth was not the only artist who condescended to honour this impostor. The great French painter, Watteau, painted his portrait, from which a print was engraved by Ford, which is inscribed, *Prenez des pillules*, and strikingly resembles the meagre figure devoted to an unenviable immortality by the great English satirist.

The author of "Coriat Junior" \* (Samuel Paterson, the auctioneer) mentions how, in his journey from Mechlin to Antwerp, his "attention to the pleasant route, as well as to the rest of the company, was much interrupted by the most impertinent itinerant jackanapes I ever met with!—who called himself a doctor.—A doctor quotha! the devil take such doctors!

"Yes, a doctor! and sworn physician (as he informed us) to most of the sovereign princes of Europe. They must be crowned heads of a royal collection of wax-work, then, thought I to myself. Nothing could stand in competition with that fellow's impudence but his ignorance; nor anything match his ignorance but his impudence. He had a smattering of all tongues, but no language—a title to several

\* This most amusing, but now little known work led to a curious controversy. Dr. Johnson said, "This book was in imitation of Sterne, and not of Coriat, whose name Paterson had chosen as a whimsical one." Paterson, in a pamphlet, entitled "An Appeal . . . by Coriat Junior," produced evidence to show that his work was written before Sterne's "Sentimental Journey," appeared. No one will doubt this fact who has seen Paterson's book and the date of its publication.

cities, but no one would have owned him—an affectation of many characters, in the variety of which he had lost his own. He would sing without being intreated, and laugh till he cracked the drum of your ear, and tell stories till you wished him dumb. In his short intervals of sleep, his snoring was hideous yet you could not but dread his waking, from the apprehension of being poisoned by his beastly belchings. If he had any pretensions to humour, it was in taking off the mendicant preachers; but even there his irreverence shocked more than his mimicry pleased, and his unseasonable jests upon fortuitous or voluntary poverty clearly evinced that human misery was the prime object of his mirth. His true character, I am fully persuaded, was that of a conjuring, legerdemain quack—one who dispenses his drops and his salves to the gaping multitude in the morning, and shows his hocus-pocus tricks, and plays his puppets to them in the evening.” But



there was no getting rid of him ; and the travellers were constrained to suffer his nauseous company till the diligence arrived at Antwerp.\*

This was the mountebank behind the scenes—off duty, so to speak. You might scarcely expect to find the man who was associated with a “Jack-pudding”—a “clown”—a “Merry Andrew,”—who addressed gaping joskins at fairs, or gaping roughs and mechanics in provincial towns and market-places—who underwent, in the early part of his chequered career, many vicissitudes of cold, hunger, and personal peril, a refined or educated practitioner. But there were mountebanks *and* mountebanks remember; and the specimen whom Paterson encountered, must not be taken as a type of a class who were usually harmless, and invariably picturesque. The “make-up” of the mountebank on duty was something very different. A full dress-suit of black silk or velvet, diamond

\* “Coriat Junior” (1767), p. 386.

(paste) shoes and knee buckles, a silver-hilted rapier, long lace ruffles, a satin waistcoat looped by a single button to display the plaits of his voluminous frill, a small three-cornered hat and bag-wig, a well-rouged face, and a (paste) jewelled snuff-box, in a jewel-bedizened hand, and the mountebank of the last century stands before you, "in his habit as he lived." As for his Merry Andrew, the counterpart of the clown of later years—his tricks, his jokes, his grimaces, and his mischances, often very amusing and more mirth-provoking than those of his successor in the sawdust, they have been vividly described by Thomas Holcroft, and by Dr. Roden.

The "doctor," as he was called, made his rounds at stated seasons, especially at fairs and wakes, and his arrival was anticipated by the tenant farmers and their labourers with an anxiety and confidence which in these days would be hardly credited. The great man, the humble predecessor

at his best of a modern travelling theatrical company or circus, sent his "agent in advance," whose duty it was to see to the erection of the stage, from which he addressed his audience, performed his simple tricks, and displayed his certificates, orders, and so-called foreign diplomas. If more than usually successful, he would generously give a supper to a select number of the farmers and principal tradesmen of the town; and when (as a matter of course in those days) they were all thoroughly intoxicated, generally contrived to make them disburse such a sum for "stuff," as abundantly covered the expenses of the entertainment. The very last mountebank practitioner who performed in the streets of London was the celebrated foreign quack, "Doctor" Bossy, whose stage stood, every Thursday, opposite the north-western colonnade of Covent Garden, near Evans's supper-rooms, of whom we read some interesting particulars, in a late evening paper taken (without

acknowledgment, by the way) from the Reminiscences of Angelo, the once celebrated master of fence.

\* \* \* \*

The stakes are drawn, the platform taken away : never more in London streets, on village greens or country market-places, shall the picturesque mountebank of the eighteenth century hold forth on the virtue of his nostrums. His diamond paste buckles, his silver-hilted rapier, his bag-wig, his elegant court suit of silk or velvet, his ruffles, his jewelled snuff-box, his crosses, orders, and diplomas have long since passed into the dust with their proprietor and "Jack-pudding" his Merry Andrew servant. The abolition of the country wakes and fairs compassed the disestablishment of these harmless practitioners; and, in an age of railways, telegraphs, telephones, electric lights, and other "resources of civilisation," there is no place left for either of them.

## CHAPTER IX.

DOCTORS AND PATIENTS : AN ESSAY ON "HUMBUG."

IT was one of the natural consequences of the unsatisfactory condition of physic during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that the skill and knowledge of its practitioners should be undervalued and despised. Scholar though he was, the physician laboured under the greatest disadvantages as compared with the members of the other learned professions. The surgeon could see the effect of his treatment and medicines, and had learned by experience the probable result which might be expected to follow outward applications; the lawyer was guided by the common, civil, and statute law, as expounded by the decisions of learned judges;

whilst his proceedings were regulated by rules of Court, and by established form and precedent, out of which he dared not travel. The case was altogether different in medicine. The physician, having no established authority to which he could refer in doubtful or exceptional cases, was compelled to rely entirely on his own judgment, and was, moreover, often expected to perform a cure where no cure was possible, or which, if it had been possible, the patient had prevented by his own reckless mode of life, and contempt of all ordinary forethought and precaution.

Some of this depreciation was countenanced by the admissions of the doctors themselves, admissions not intended of course, for the general public, but which reached the general public notwithstanding. What shall we say, for instance, of the following candid confession, made by W. Cockburn M.D.? Writing in 1703, on the subject of what he is pleased to term, "The present uncertainty

of the Knowledge of Medicines," he says, "I may be apt to think that there can be no manner of doubt about the great imperfection of our Knowledge in respect of Med'cines; and how inestimable a good it wou'd be to be brought out of this Infirmary." We quite agree with the learned physician, and would further inquire, What is the *raison d'être* of a Doctor of *Medicine*, if his "Knowledge in respect of Med'cines" is imperfect? Further on he asks his professional brethren, "Is the previous knowledge of a Med'cine, or of Med'cines, *by its or their qualities necessary before we administer them? And have you this kind of knowledge?* If you have, show it us, for it is much wanted." Having put these questions clearly and lucidly, Cockburn, M.D., becomes suddenly enveloped in a mental fog, and loses all lucidity of expression. "If you have not" (that knowledge) he continues, "then require no more of others than you yourselves are master of; and order as few

Med'cines for the Publick as you do to Patients; and none to either of 'em till you have satisfied us that you can do it in the mentioned way." The doctor's meaning is obviously this: "Confine yourselves as much as possible to simples, or to medicines the properties and physiological effects of which you *do* understand. Instruct yourselves, meanwhile, in the properties and effects of others of which you know nothing; and when you have attained that necessary instruction and knowledge, then, and then only, you will be in a position to combat disease, and to do your duty to your patients." The statement appears a curious one to us moderns and outsiders. We are unprepared to find a physician, even of the early part of the eighteenth century, admitting that his professional brethren were not only ignorant of Medicine, but ignorant also of the effects which medicines would produce. What shall we say then of the following statement, made by a celebrated "specialist" in June only of



1885? "There are now anatomists and physiologists," says this distinguished physician, "*who have never set foot within the walls of a hospital,* whilst, on the other hand, a knowledge of chemistry is deemed by many a superfluous accomplishment in a physician."\*

"Medicine," says another writer, also of the early part of the last century, "is a very difficult science, because the theory depends upon the understanding, and the practice upon the imagination. . . . Unless we examine the diet, the temper, the climate, the Waters of the Place, and perhaps also *the constellation of the day*, we can never take just measures. . . . I shall only add," says the writer, "that this Science is full of danger to the Patient, because it is founded upon conjectures; and, according to Plato, the conjectures of physicians are very uncertain."†

\* Dr Morell Mackenzie, in *Fortnightly Review*, June 1885.

† Chevreau, 1703.

Dryden was a consistent despiser of the professors of medicine. He looked upon Medicine, indeed, with the contempt with which a man of practical mind and singularly brilliant intellect must necessarily regard a science which, in his time, at least, advanced very little outside the pale of theory, if not of quackery. He gave the doctors credit, nevertheless, for something. They had found "the bark," although they had failed to meet with the inner substance which it covered—the "tree" of knowledge itself.\* How they managed to find the one without the other, or how the "bark" came to be separated from the "tree," which could not exist without it, the poet does not inform us, nor is it our business to enquire. The absurdity of the simile, however gracefully expressed, will be patent to every one. The scornors of medicine, ancient and modern, are too numerous

\* See Dryden's poem of "The Cock and the Fox."

to mention. Among those whose names at once occur to us are Ben Jonson, Philip Massinger, Samuel Butler, Sarah Duchess of Marlborough, Lord John Hervey, Jonathan Swift, William Hogarth, Charles Churchill, Tobias Smollett, Samuel Richardson, Christopher Anstey, Thomas Rowlandson, James Gillray, Lord Byron, and a host of others.

Smollett's intellectual superiority would not suffer him to stoop to the degrading practices by which some of the professional men of his time wormed themselves into favour. That a man of his independent temper should be an unsuccessful practitioner, followed as a matter of necessary consequence, for which men of literary tastes have reason indeed to be thankful. But failure engendered a hatred of the professors of the art in which he had vainly sought to establish a footing, and he hesitates at no assertion which will establish a case against them.

He tells them, at least, one or two palpable truths. "There are as many schisms," he alleges, "in medicine, as well in religion," each sect being able to "quote the fathers in" support of the tenets they profess;" and in reference to the proverbial difference of opinion which characterises physicians in consultation, few readers will forget that admirable description of the trio of doctors, victims of the practical joke played by Peregrine Pickle, who discuss, in the ante-room of a patient they have never spoken with, with whose malady they are wholly unacquainted, the nature of the complaint under which he suffers. No. 1 gave his opinion, that "the distemper was an obstinate anthritis;" No. 2 affirmed that it was a chronic malady, due to the patient's own indiscretion; while No. 3 expressed his deliberate and unalterable conviction, that the unfortunate patient was the victim of "an inveterate scurvy," a name which at that time would appear to have been

given to any disease, the nature of which was not precisely understood.

Smollett made a dead set at the physicians of Bath. The reason of this was that he had attempted practice at the Western City; but, with the narrow and restricted views which more or less distinguish the society of provincial towns even in the nineteenth century, and which were rife at the time he penned his attack, it is clear that the wide intellect of the novelist would have but little sympathy. He left Bath in disgust, just as poor Chatterton quitted the neighbouring city of Bristol, and with a peculiar contempt for the narrow-minded circle of provincial physicians, who made a harvest out of the company who frequented the fashionable spa at this period. He writes of them with unmitigated scorn; describing them as "a class of animals who live in the place, like so many ravens hovering over a carcase, and who even ply for employment

like scullers at Hungerford Stairs." He would even have us believe that the greater part of these doctors had their correspondents in London, whose business it was to make themselves acquainted with the history, character, and ailments of every one that repaired to Bath for the benefit of the waters, and that these correspondents furnished their employers with intelligence, which they were enabled at times to turn to their own profit and advantage.

Although much of this, we may well suppose, was grossly exaggerated, we can at the same time believe from the contemporary descriptions of society given by Henry Fielding, by Charles Churchill, and by Samuel Richardson, that there was something at the bottom of it; and we may at least imagine the consternation which ensued amongst the Bath faculty, when the despised doctor whom they had elbowed so uncere- moniously, dropped among them the destruc-

tive shell labelled, "The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle."

The contempt which little Samuel Richardson felt for the doctors of his time, he puts into the mouth of the dying Belton, the friend of Lovelace the persecutor of Clarissa. Belton, with a strength of language and vituperation which strikes us as somewhat inconsistent with our idea of a man wasted by a long and hopeless illness, compares the everlasting "dawbing" and "plaistering" of the physician, disrespectfully with the far greater skill and success of the practitioner in surgery. "The only honest and certain part of the art of healing," he scornfully tells the astonished doctor, "is surgery. A good surgeon is worth a thousand of you. I have been in surgeons' hands often [we may well believe he had], and have always found reason to depend on their skill. But *your* art, sir," he asks with withering scorn, "what is it?" He would

have us believe that the constitution and the appetite of the sufferer are destroyed by the unskilfulness of the physician, who, when he can do no more mischief, shrugs his shoulders and abandons hope. He relies upon the opinion of a deceased friend, a worthy named "Blomer"—himself a physician, who was wont to declare (probably in his cups) "there was nothing at all but pickpocket parade in the Physician's art, and that *the best guesser was the best physician.*" All this was very well, my good Belton. No doubt the opinion of "Blomer," M.D., so far as he himself was concerned, was valuable; but in your tirade against the physician who has been honest enough to tell you he can give you no hope, you lose sight of the fact that you have brought yourself to a pass when the "art" of the physician, whom the Son of Syrach even in ancient days delighted to honour, can no longer be of any avail. You have yourself filled the cup of



destruction, and if the process of filling it involves (as it does) the necessity of quaffing it to the dregs—why blame the *physician*?

But of all those who reviled, satirized, or abused them, the physicians found their most bitter and unscrupulous enemy in Jonathan Swift. As a specimen of invective—almost malignant in character—in which this merciless wit would oftentimes indulge, the following extract, or rather, abstract (for the satire is too gross to give in its entirety) appears to us unrivalled. There is, he tells us, “a sort of people bred up among us in the profession, *or the pretence* of curing the sick. . . . Their fundamental [principle] is that all diseases arise from repletion, whence they conclude that a great evacuation of the body is necessary, either through the natural passage, or upwards. . . . Their next business is, from herbs, minerals, gums, oils, shells, salts, juices, sea-weed, excrements, barks of trees, serpents, toads, frogs,

spiders, dead men's flesh and bones, birds, beasts, and fishes, to form a composition, for smell and taste, the most abominable, nauseous, and detestable they can possibly contrive, which the stomach immediately rejects with loathing, and this they call a vomit; or else, from the same store-house, with some other poisonous additions, they command us to take . . . a medicine equally annoying and disgusting . . . which . . . they call a purge or clyster." The concluding words of the satire we give in their entirety: "One great excellency in this tribe is their skill at prognostics, wherein they seldom fail; their prediction in real diseases when they rise to any degree of malignity, generally portending death, *which is always in their power, when recovery is not*; and therefore, upon any unexpected signs of amendment, after they have pronounced their sentence, *rather than be accused as false prophets, they know how to approve their sagacity to the world by a season-*

*able dose.*" \* The life of Swift embraces a period of seventy-eight years (from 1667 to 1745), of which the last few were spent in the hopeless abyss of idiocy. The Dean was born two years after the Great Plague; and contemporary, therefore, with him were Radcliffe (1650—1714), Mead (1673—1754), Arbuthnot (1675—1735), and others. The world of London medicine was a small one, but it included in its ranks men who have left an absolutely imperishable fame in the annals of medical history. Admitting, however, the generally unsatisfactory state of physic at the time; admitting, even, the ignorance and quackery of some of its professors, a more false and malignant statement than that which concludes this quotation has seldom, we imagine, been penned.

The good gentlemen who were thus vilified, contrived, nevertheless, to get, at this very time,

\* "Gulliver's Travels," Pt. IV. Works (Constable's ed. 1824), vol. ii., 323.

into superb practice and magnificent professional incomes. One year after the satire was written, Richard Mead, who had been long employed in the family of George, Prince of Wales, was appointed his physician, when that lumbering prince succeeded to the throne, under the title of George the Second. His enemies whispered that much of Mead's success was due to the influence of what in these days would be called "humbug," and it is possible that the charge may be true, not, perhaps against Mead himself, but against some of those who were interested in his welfare. A certain amount of professional "humbug," may, however, be more than excusable: we recognise its presence in the round velvet cap and gown of the old physician,—no less distinctly in the full dress professional black, the cane, and the preposterous cauliflower wig of his successor. All these impressed, not only the vulgar, but even the educated patrician; they marked the man

who wore or carried these symbols as a man out of the common herd, one who was supposed to have given his whole attention—not to the getting of fees, but to the cure of suffering humanity.

Mead's early efforts to establish himself in practice, would seem, according to some unenlightened and Gentile sources, to have been largely seconded by his wide-awake old father, a nonconformist minister at Stepney. According to these "men of Belial," whenever the young doctor was called out of his father's chapel,—which seems to have been a matter of frequent occurrence—it was the practice of the old gentleman to stop in the middle of his discourse, and say with much feeling, "Dear brethren, let us offer up a prayer for the safe recovery of the poor patient, to whom *my son* is gone to administer relief." This may be an invention of men who are dead in trespasses and sins, but many stories are current which seem

to us still more improbable. Is "humbug" (in a different form, it is true) always absent, at this day, from the portals of the City Tabernacle or the doors of Exeter Hall? Have we not heard it *nasally* proclaim itself, when long-haired, smooth-cheeked divines, hailing from the States, enunciate pulpit-jokes, which would be pronounced indifferent in any travelling circus of unregenerate equestrians?

If Richard Mead himself was a "humbug," he was the sort of humbug for whom we feel a profound sympathy and respect. The man who could attend Freind's patients when he had got himself into political trouble, and hand him over the very large sums he received, by way of fees from his brother practitioner's patients,—some say many thousands of pounds, could have been no ordinary man. The man who had the courage, forty years after he had contributed a number of medical essays, to retract, in a subsequent edition,

not a few of his former opinions ; to acknowledge that "in some facts he had been mistaken," and to admit that, "in some conclusions" he had been altogether "too precipitate," was, even in his own time, a veritable *rara avis*. Some men in our day, both in and out of the profession, pose as infallibles, however preposterous and however mistaken their opinions are afterwards shown to be. We live in an age of practical infallibility. Some men would disintegrate the British Empire and figure as infallibles, when they ought rather to be consigned to the ward of a lunatic asylum. Richard Mead, M.D., was emphatically not one of these objectionable gentlemen.

But there is another kind of "humbug" for which we have less sympathy, and it is this kind of "humbug" to which we have been gradually leading. The public are apt to judge of the merits of a professional man (not unnaturally) by his success. The members of his profession, however,

are after all the best judges; and in this opinion of the public's they do not invariably coincide. It is not unfrequently the case that while a physician, of whom his brethren have an exalted opinion, meets with but little favour from the community of patients, another, who is a very ordinary practitioner, and who is so considered by the profession at large, enjoys an extensive practice, and a great popular reputation. A physician of this sort may be treated with much outward deference by his medical brethren, on account of the position in which public favour has placed him; and this fact is often mistaken by patients as evidence that he is held in great estimation by the members of the profession generally. On this point let us quote the opinion of a physician: "The quackery," says Dr. Hooker, "which is practised among medical men, is a much greater evil than that which is abroad among the community. I attack it therefore with an unsparing hand. In so doing I expose many



of the tricks and manœuvres which are employed by those physicians who, pursuing medicine as a trade instead of a profession; *study the science of patient-getting*, to the neglect of the science of patient curing."

The author of "Physic and Physicians," written nearly half a century ago, evidently had this "quackery" in view, when he satirically recommended the physician in search of practice, to visit the opera frequently, and to be careful to instruct the messengers, when the performance was over, to vociferate loudly for his carriage. "This," he says, "is an effectual way of making you known as a London physician and a man of fashion. Be regular in your attendance at church; and instruct your servant to call you out occasionally during the service when you first start in practice. It will be of service if you can persuade your *carriage friends* to call often at your house. Always contrive to have a coach standing at your door

on Sunday, as it is sure to attract the notice of the people as they return from church, and will lead the public to believe that you are a practising physician." The man of the world would smile at this advice nowadays. Times have changed. There is no opera from the portals of which you can vociferate by proxy for your carriage, unless it be the portals of the *Opéra Comique*, and to play that sort of game there would evidently be not worth the candle. Fish have grown more wary, and the physician who wishes to catch them must keep pace with the times.

These things were done in a very unvarnished way in the days of the old *régime*. By way of illustration of what we mean, we disentomb the following anecdote from *Champfort*. Like the story which attaches to the name of Matthew Mead, it may, or may not be true, but it serves well enough to illustrate our subject. D'Alembert was spending the evening at Madame du Deffand's,

where were also President Hénault and M. Pont de Vesle. By and by the name of a fashionable physician was announced. The new comer bowed to the lady with the grace and formal salutation of the old school: *Madame, je vous présente mes très-humbles respects.* Turning to M. Hénault, he altered his tone, *J'ai bien l'honneur de vous saluer.* Turning again to M. Pont de Vesle, he thus obsequiously expressed himself, *Monsieur, je suis votre très-humble serviteur.* Having thus run up and down the scale of compliment, the doctor became conscious of the presence of d'Alembert, a very great man among his literary confrères; but d'Alembert simply represented to the mind of the fashionable physician a personage in quite another sphere of life, and him he simply nodded to, with a patronising, *Bon jour, monsieur.* Although the fashionable physician did not see the Nemesis which was about to sweep away doctor and patient into the sea of revolutionary destruction, we may

rest assured that he had graduated in that knowledge of the character of his patrons, which Dr. Hooker calls "quackery."

The old expedient of having a hired retainer to summon you out of church or the theatre, would fail to deceive the veriest infant nowadays. Even in the old time, the bubble very quickly exploded. The one who first practised it, seems to have been a certain Dr. Kennedy of Nassau Street, Soho, who flourished towards the close of the last century. Three nights in the week, at least, during the play-going season, the doctor was to be seen in the boxes of Drury Lane or Covent Garden, and the doctor, although an ostensible spectator, was himself the principal performer in a farce of his own invention, in which the performers were three in number—himself and a couple of hired assistants. One of the latter, dressed in a smart livery, would present himself between the acts at the house at which he knew the doctor was *not* present, and

call loudly for "Dr. Kennedy." The other actor in a different livery would meanwhile rush into the theatre in which the principal performer was placidly seated in the front row, and bawl his name in stentorian tones. It was part of the performance that the doctor should then rise, and, taking his hat and professional cane, depart, bowing apologetically right and left, as he quitted the house. The performance, though frequently repeated drew attention and admiration: "Bless me!" the great people would soliloquize, as the doctor intended that they should, "that Dr. Kennedy would seem to have half the patients in the town!"

But the doctor was not a wise man; not wise enough at least, to know when the farce had run its allotted time. As might have been expected, the galleries in no long time entered into the full spirit of the entertainment, but in a manner which proved very embarrassing to the dramatist.

One night, a wag in the gallery shouted, "Doctor Kennedy! Doctor Kennedy! *Where is Doctor Kennedy?*"\* The cry was taken up by hundreds of brazen throats, and the practice became for long afterwards so frequent and embarrassing that the discomfited doctor was ashamed to show his nose at Drury Lane or Covent Garden.

It is pleasant to contrast these "dodgers" with the representative of a very different class, the man of real talent and perseverance, who, scorning to tread the by-paths which conduct to practice, is content to keep to the straight but longer road,

\* This singular man was a very tall and lanky personage. One stormy night, when returning from Drury Lane in his sedan, the chairmen in endeavouring to dodge some falling tiles, gave the machine so violent a lurch that his head, which was bare (and probably never strong), coming in contact with the roof, he received so violent a concussion that for some weeks his life was despaired of. Foote had intended to make Kennedy the subject of one of his satirical pieces, but this lucky accident saved him. Finding him in so dangerous condition, he felt, as Goldsmith expressed it, "for once, and the only time, compunctious," destroyed his manuscript, and vowed never to indulge in satire at the expense of a friend and a really kind-hearted man.

and relies for success upon merit alone. "For many years," says Dr. Elliotson, in his introductory lecture preparatory to a course which he delivered on the practice of medicine at University College, "For many years I toiled, and saw many of my contemporaries, many of my juniors, who worked less *but were wiser in their generation*, pass me by. I published work after work; edition after edition, and paper after paper, was honoured with a place in the transactions of the first medical society in Europe. I was physician to a large metropolitan hospital, and attended there, and gratuitously out of doors, above 20,000 patients—all in vain. In 1828 my profession was not more lucrative to me; and was as short of my actual expenses as it had been in 1818. At that time, the *Lancet* was pleased, now and then, to publish a clinical lecture delivered by me at St. Thomas's, and my practice at once doubled. The following year it published the greater part as I delivered

them, and my practice doubled again. Last season, the same journal published them all, and my practice was doubled a third time. This astonished me the more as my clinical lectures\* were generally delivered with little or no premeditation, while all I published myself had cost me great labour, many a headache, and much midnight oil. It was through the general practitioners, in the large majority of instances—and through general practitioners for the most part, with whom I had not the honour of any acquaintance—that the publication of these lectures accomplished my success. To the body of general practitioners, therefore, I owe a debt of gratitude. They have called me forth spontaneously from no interested motive, and

\* *Clinic*, or *clinical* is a word applied to the observation and treatment of disease at the bedside of the sick ; and hence, *clinical lectures* are such as are given either at the bedside of the patient, or from notes and observations made at the bedside. This is the most valuable mode of instruction in the art of medicine ; the students in a public hospital being brought into the presence of disease, and taught to observe the characteristics of each individual case, and the effects of the various modes of treatment,



I cannot exert myself too much in the education of their successors."

Contrast this patient and laborious worker with the gentleman whose lineaments become so familiar to every one of us when traced by the practised hand of Mr. Wilkie Collins. While the indefatigable student, publishing work after work, edition after edition, attends 20,000 patients gratuitously, and earns scarcely enough to find him bread and cheese, this gentleman makes money fast, simply by studying the weaknesses of his patients. "He came," says Mr. Wilkie Collins, "in a carriage and pair, with the necessary bald head, and the indispensable white cravat. He felt her ladyship's pulse, and put a few gentle questions. He turned his back solemnly, as only a great doctor can, on his own positive internal conviction that the patient had nothing whatever the matter with her. He said, with every appearance of believing in himself, 'Nerves, Lady Lundie. Repose in bed

is essentially necessary. I will write a prescription.' He prescribed with perfect gravity: Aromatic Spirits of Ammonia—15 drops. Spirit of Red Lavender—10 drops. Syrup of Orange Peel—2 drachms. Camphor Julep—1 ounce. When he had written *Misce fiat Haustus* (instead of 'Mix a draught')—when he had added, *Ter die sumendus* (instead of 'To be taken three times a day')—and when he had certified to his own Latin by putting his initials at the end, he had only to make his bow, to slip two guineas into his pocket, and to go his way, with an approving professional conscience in the character of a physician who had done his duty."

The details of the second visit, which we find several pages further on, are too good to be omitted: to omit them, in fact, would be to leave the picture unfinished. "He found his patient cured by the draught! It was contrary to all rule and precedent; it savoured of quackery—

the red lavender had no business to do what the red lavender had done — but there she was, nevertheless, up and dressed, and contemplating a journey to London on the next day but one. ‘An act of duty, doctor [the patient, we may observe, was worthy of the physician], is involved in this—whatever the sacrifice, I must go!’ No other explanation could be obtained. The patient was plainly determined—nothing remained but for the physician to retreat with unimpaired dignity, and a paid fee. He did it. ‘Our art,’ he explained to Lady Lundie in confidence, ‘is nothing after all but a choice between two alternatives. For instance, I see you—not cured, as you think—but sustained by abnormal excitement. I have to ask which is the least of the two evils—to risk letting you travel, or to irritate you by keeping you at home. With your constitution we must risk the journey. Be careful, to keep the window of the carriage up on the side on which the wind

blows. Let the extremities be moderately warm, and the mind easy—and pray don't omit to provide yourself with a second bottle of the mixture before you start.' He made his bow, as before—he slipped two guineas into his pocket, as before—and he went his way, as before, with an approving conscience, in the character of a physician who had done his duty. What an enviable profession is Medicine! And why," asks the accomplished novelist, "don't we all belong to it?"

But if *some* medical men are indebted to "humbug" for success, the practice we have hinted at seems to be at least excusable. The physician has his bread to get, and if he elects to earn it by taking advantage, to some extent, of the peculiarities of wealthy and crotchety patients, why should we greatly blame him? "Humbug," however, is not confined to doctors. It largely prevails among patients, and when these latter are guilty of the

practice, it takes a form which is more than seriously objectionable. The patients guilty of the practice we shall presently describe, deprive medical men—general practitioners, as well as physicians and surgeons, of the remuneration which rightfully belongs to them. The encroachments of well-to-do people on the gratuitous relief afforded at the London Hospitals and dispensaries, surpass anything that the public of the provinces can imagine. Rich women (we should be sorry to libel the sex by calling such persons *ladies*) have been known to drive in their carriages to a convenient distance from the hospital, whence they walk, and shortly present themselves in plain attire to receive the advice of the duped and unsuspecting physician. Wives and daughters of *wealthy* men have been known to condescend to borrow their servants' dresses to act a practical lie, and appear at the hospitals in the character of *out patients*. Nor is this abominable practice confined to women. Well-

to-do publicans, pawn-brokers, tradesmen, manufacturers, and their wives, attend in the out patient department; subscribers to hospitals make use for themselves or relatives of the tickets intended only for the necessitous poor; wealthy persons send their servants. Less objectionable, perhaps (but still objectionable), is the practice of large firms paying small subscriptions to hospitals, for the purpose of securing medical relief for their workpeople at a considerable saving to themselves. Mr. Whitfield of St. Thomas's Hospital, writing years ago to the *Times*, complained with justice of the "many persons in affluence, rich in this world's wealth but poor in mind, who to their shame never hesitate to seek advice and medicine from the hospitals as *paupers*, committing not only a moral deception, and defrauding the private practitioner of that which, under a better system, would fall to his lot, but (at hospitals where any limitation is made to the daily number of patients) often

preventing, by their impudent assurance, the humble labourer from obtaining that relief to which he is more justly entitled."\* If the humbug of a certain class of doctors may be considered as somewhat open to animadversion, how shall we characterize deceit so objectionable in its nature, as anything short of the offence of obtaining medical advice, assistance, and relief, "under false and fraudulent pretences"?

\* Quoted by Dr. Rivington, in "The Medical Profession" (first Carmichael Prize Essay, 1879), 336.

## CHAPTER X.

### MINERAL WATERS AND THE QUACKERY OF "MODERN MIRACLES."

ROUGHLY speaking, the best known modern spas of Great Britain, giving them in their alphabetical order, are Bath, Buxton, Carlisle, Cheltenham, Clifton, Gilsland, Guisborough, Harrogate, Knaresborough, Leamington, Malvern,\* Matlock, Tunbridge Wells, Sandrock (Isle of Wight), the Bridge of Allan in Stirlingshire, and Moffatt in Dumfriesshire. Among those less generally known, we may name Derrindaff in Ulster, Crieff in Perthshire, Droitwich in Worcestershire, Filey in Yorkshire, Holywell\* in Lancashire, Inverleithen (Peebles),

\* Malvern and Holywell are scarcely entitled to be called *mineral*, as they claim repute only by reason of their extreme purity.



Newcastle (near Dublin), Pannanich Wells in Aberdeenshire, Pitkeathly (Perthshire), Redruth in Cornwall, Rothesay (Isle of Bute), Scarborough—better known as a sea-bathing resort, Shapwells near Gilsland (Cumberland), Shotley (Northumberland), Spital (Durham), Swanlinbar near Enniskillen, Willoughby near Rugby, Woodhall, Lincoln, etc., etc.

We remember seeing it stated in one of the evening "Turn overs," that it is always "afternoon" at Bath, meaning thereby, we presume, that its day is over. Practically, however, it has been "afternoon" at Bath for the past sixty years at least. If you wish to see "Provincialism," that peculiarity of English country society which astonishes foreigners—not perhaps at its worst, but in a very advanced form, the reader should seek it at this western City. The upper middle class is split into two cliques, and these again subdivided into many lesser ones—the one composed principally of half-pay captains, colonels, and members of both services on

the "retired list;" the other, of the very good people, headed of course by the clergy. Between these two cliques oscillate (so to speak) the members of the learned professions—of law and medicine; and the moment the wife and daughters of a professional man enter one clique, they are shut out for ever and ever from the other. There is no commercial enterprise at Bath. The city—a large and handsome one—strikes the London visitor as one which has not only an exalted idea of its own importance, but an absolute contempt for the outer world in general. The beautiful old western city was a different place in days of yore. When the doctors of George the Second's time failed to understand a patient's case, a quandary in which they frequently found themselves landed, they got over the difficulty—oftentimes successfully—by sending him to Bath. We say oftentimes successfully, for society and change of scene worked a benefit, which no amount of mineral water unaided

could possibly have effected. Fashionable people of the last century went to "the Bath," as it was termed in the affected, mincing language of the day, regularly once every season at least. Bath, in fact, when Smollett and Anstey wrote their amusing satires, and when Goldsmith penned his unacknowledged and most amusing life of "Richard Nash, Esquire," was admitted to be not merely Bath, but emphatically *the Bath par excellence*.

Twelve miles from Bath lies Clifton, once celebrated for its so-called "Hotwell" water. Doctor Keir observed of this water, at a time when people possibly believed in the Doctor himself, that it had "been found that consumptions, even in their last stages, when the obstructed parts of the lungs were come to suppuration, and an ulcer was manifest, when the body was wasted almost to a skeleton, when nocturnal sweats were profuse, and even colliquitive diarrhoeas were common, that a sudden stop has been put to the rapid career, the symptoms

gradually mitigated, and a recovery at last [was] obtained by the regular and long-continued use of the water and a strict milk diet." It is possible that "Doctor Keir" believed this statement, and it is more than likely that it answered his purpose and procured him practice. Nobody drinks the Hotwells water now. The very pump-room, which overlooked the dreary oasis of mud spanned by the beautiful Suspension Bridge, has been long removed for the very sufficient reason that the money taken for the use of the excellent swimming bath and (the once famed) mineral water, did not pay even the outgoing expenses. For this state of things Clifton has itself to thank. Local jealousies, an utter absence of the spirit of co-operation and enterprise among its inhabitants repel and drive away strangers. Unlike Bath, even in the days of its prosperity Clifton was as dull as ditchwater, very nearly as dull as its modern representative, if dulness of so impenetrable a character can ever

hope to be equalled. With beauties of situation and scenery which render it naturally attractive, Clifton, owing to the exclusiveness of its *parvenu* aristocracy, ridiculed by Sheridan in *The School for Scandal*, combined with the absence of any sort of amusement, is the last place to which a fashionable doctor would be mad enough to consign a consumptive patient. For the past thirty years the place has been the paradise of a class of German street musicians, who would be driven headlong out of London—of screaming “hooters”—of nursery-maids afflicted with incurable melancholy; but, with the exception of those, whose suicidal tendencies draw them in the direction of the Suspension Bridge, which the trustees wisely keep unprotected for their accommodation, no strangers visit Clifton except for the purpose of leaving it with as little delay as possible.

The cause of the decadence of Bath is accounted for by the gradual change which has taken place in

modern English habits and manners. Life at Bath during the last century, approached in some degree to the habits and manners which prevailed among the visitors at Homburg, Spa, and Wiesbaden, before the gaming tables and their proprietors had been sent to the right about. At Homburg—at Spa—at Wiesbaden—at Baden Baden—the visitor found himself among scenes and company wholly new to him, and presenting life in an aspect in which he was unaccustomed to regard it, a circumstance which contributed to his amusement, and consequently to his benefit so long as he abstained from the *rouge et noir* and *roulette* tables. There were balls ("routs" as they were then termed), fashionable assemblies, and high play in the old days of Bath; the ladies and gentlemen bathed together in public; there was no lack of the scandal in which our great-grandmothers especially delighted. All this has changed: it is incompatible indeed with the idea of the "fitness of things"

which at present prevails, which idea, by the way, the most correct of us were thankful to leave behind us, the moment we entered the Kursaals of unregenerated Germany.

The mineral springs of Bath and the Hotwells owed their celebrity, in a great measure, to Dr. Mead. Tunbridge Wells, in like manner, was indebted to Dr. Patrick Madan, who, in 1687, published an essay in praise of the medical virtues of its waters. Other watering-places acquired a reputation by similar influences: it became the *fashion* to drink mineral waters, and the moment fashion brought its influence to bear upon any place which had the luck to possess a mineral spring, the fortune of that place was, for the time being, made. Such places became so inconveniently crowded, that it was no uncommon thing for the surplus visitors to sleep in the "long room," as the assembly or "rout" room was called, the gentlemen being separated from the ladies by a curtain. This was

the case at Buxton a century and a half ago, and scarcely "sixty years since," at Strathpeffer in Ross-shire, a sort of Scotch Harrogate, celebrated for its sulphurous waters, the fashionables were crowded into small cabins, and pigs and patients were to be found in the same hotel.

There was a time when the Hampstead mineral water was in high repute. There was a "long room" and a tavern attached, so that the visitors might qualify the water, if they pleased, with "something short." At the same time flourished Chads Wells and Bagnigge Wells. The ferruginous waters of Islington enjoyed the highest reputation in the eighteenth century, but the Islingtonian would deem you a fit inhabitant of a lunatic asylum if you asked to be guided to them in these days. The powerful sulphate of magnesia waters of Epsom, are now little resorted to. The spring was discovered in 1613, and the waters were at first used externally only. "Epsom Well" was



the fashionable spa of Charles the Second's days, and a very coarse, but mirth-provoking description of the powerful internal effects of the water, will be found in the *Musarum Delicice*, published four years prior to the restoration of the old *régime* in 1660.

Foreign spas are to be counted literally by the thousand. If the reader—living, say, in the days of enchantment—could transform himself after the manner described in the “Arabian Nights” into an enchanted bird, and take an enchanted bird's-eye view, including in its illimitable range the whole superficies of Europe, he would find the face of the continent as thickly dotted with mineral water “stations,” as the face of a small-pox patient, before Jenner had promulgated his priceless discovery, was pitted with pock marks. Chief among the thousand we may name Aix-la-Chapelle (Rhenish Prussia); Aix-les-Bains (Savoy); Baden, near Vienna; Baden Baden; Bagnères de Bigorre (Hautes

Pyrenées); Bourbonle (Auvergne); Castellamare (Naples); Chianciano (Tuscany); Eaux Bonnes, and Eaux Chaudes (Basses Pyrenées); Ems on the Lahn; Gastein (Duchy of Salzburg); Godesberg, near Bonn; Homburg, near Frankfort; Ischl (Austria); Karlsbad (Bohemia); Kissingen (Bavaria); Marienbad (Bohemia); Pfaffers (Canton of St. Gall); Plombières (Vosges); Schinznach (Canton of Aargau); Schlangenbad, between Wiesbaden and Ems; Spa (Belgium); Toplitz-Schönau (Bohemia); Uriage, near Grénoble; Vals (Ardèche); Vichy; Wiesbaden; and Wildbad (Black Forest). For the special diseases, for which these and nine hundred other mineral waters are applicable, we must refer the reader to his "handbooks."\*

Of American mineral waters, personally we know nothing. The fame, at least, of two has found its way across the Atlantic—the fashionable station of

\* See also Bradshaw's "Dictionary of Mineral Waters," an admirable little compilation.

Saratoga, in the State of New York, and the white sulphur springs of Delaware.

Last to be mentioned are the imported waters. Familiar to all will be *Apollinaris*, in the valley of the Aar, near Remagen in Rhenish Prussia. The large amount of carbonic acid gas to be found in the "Queen of Table Waters," as the wideawake proprietors term it, is due to the fact that the gas is caught in condensers as it escapes from the spring, and is then pumped into the bottles. This agreeable water has superseded (in England) the far superior water Neider-Selters, so familiar to us on the continent. Of medical waters, *Friedrichshall* (in Bavaria, near Kissingen) is artificially prepared; *Hunyadi Janos*, near Buda Pesth in Hungary, a sulphate and saline water; *Kronthal*, alkali saline water; *Rippoldsau* (Baden, in the Black Forest) a saline or chalybeate water; and *Pullna-Bitter* water (Bohemia), the exportation of which annually reaches four million bottles. There

are no bathing or drinking establishments at Pullna, the whole range of buildings being appropriated to bottling this far-famed water for exportation.

The term "mineral waters" is applied to those which hold in solution a variety of minerals at various temperatures. Some writers have denied the therapeutic properties of mineral waters, basing their opinions on the minute quantities of mineral matter held in solution; but those who are *practically* acquainted with them, know the absolute worthlessness of *theories* of this kind. Take for example, the well known and wonderful effect of the sulphurous alkaline waters of Aix-la-Chapelle upon persons suffering under skin affections, or from the effects of mercurial poisoning. In many cases mineral waters act with an energy which no scepticism as to their power can possibly refute. At Ax in the department of Ariège, Dr. Garrigon has known death occur from the injudicious and

excessive use of the *Vignerie* spring. The Carlsbad waters if taken by persons of a plethoric and sanguine habit of body, may occasion dangerous symptoms. Many of these mineral waters are of a much more complex character than the older chemists, with their less perfect methods of analysis suspected. Quite recently Dr. Thenard has discovered arsenic in the waters of Mont Dore (Puy de Dôme). It must not be forgotten, too, that these medicines compounded in the vast laboratory of nature, work more surely and efficiently than any sort of artificially prepared mixtures; while many are free from the objections of producing intestinal irritation and other inconveniences with which the latter are oftentimes chargeable.

The doctor who establishes himself at one of these stations long enough to acquire a reputation, pockets his fees with little trouble: his best patients, we need not say, are English people. He affects to *diagnose* the nature of his patient's

complaint, and gives his directions with an affectation of wisdom, which shows that he has graduated in the study of "humbug." The directions (very much the same everywhere), have been well described by Sir Francis Head, "'Monsieur,' said the doctor (for he speaks a little French) 'Monsieur,' he repeated, 'à six heures du matin vous prendrez à la Pauline trois verres! trois verres à la Pauline!' he repeated; 'à dix heures, vous prendrez un bain—en sortant du bain vous prendrez,'—(he paused and, *after several seconds of deep thought*, he added)—'encore deux verres, et à cinq heures du soir, Monsieur, vous prendrez — (*another long pause*)—'encore trois verres! Monsieur! ces eaux vous feront beaucoup de bien!'" And beaucoup de bien they certainly accomplish not only for the patients, but especially for the doctor, who assumes this affectation of profound cogitation. Fruit, by the way, is strictly prohibited, for the simple reason, that whenever raw fruit and

mineral water unexpectedly meet each other in the human interior, a sort of bubble and squeak contest invariably takes place, the one always endeavouring to turn the other out of the house.

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We commenced our first chapter by reference to the early days of the Middle Ages, when medicine was placed under the control of monkish ignorance and superstition, when patients, in the absence of any competent knowledge on the part of the ignorant priest-doctor, were cured or treated by the exposition and imposition of relics. That these days are not yet over; that the Romish priesthood of to-day still professes to heal disease in a mode superior to and altogether differing from the method adopted by the secular professor, has been demonstrated lately by Mr. Richard F. Clarke, "S. J." The peculiar process of therapeutics, advocated by that gentleman, is described by him in an article on "Modern Miracles," in the course of

which he refers us to certain manifestations at Lourdes, reports of which reached the ears of us heretics in England, and were viewed, sooth to say with all the contempt which was due to them. That this contempt was atheistic and abominable is insisted on by Mr. Clarke in a manner which shows us that the credulity and superstition of some of the Catholic priesthood of the nineteenth century would do credit to the days when Paul the Fifth fulminated his celebrated interdict against the Republic of St. Mark.

"The apparition and *miracles* at Lourdes," says our authority, "have received the explicit sanction of the bishop of the diocese, who has himself visited the Grotto many times as a pilgrim, and, after a most careful and thorough investigation, issued a *mandement* in which he formally gives his judgment in favour of the reality of the apparition, declares the miracles wrought, to be the work of the supernatural power of God, and



authorises the devotion of our Lady of Lourdes, recommending it to the faithful of his diocese. Nor is there any possibility of denying the existence of a consentient voice bearing witness on the part of Catholics,—bishops, priests, and laymen, in every quarter of the globe, to their sincere and unhesitating belief in the reality of the miracles performed. We pass these over, because we are writing for non-Catholics, and we have no right to ask them to listen to the voice of an authority they do not recognise, or to be influenced by the consensus of those whom they regard as misled by religious fervour, and deceived by pre-conceived opinions.

“But we have a right to ask them to believe in facts, attested to by a number of intelligent and honest witnesses, whatever explanation they may give of them; we have a right to claim their assent to the testimony of physicians who formally attest the results of a careful diagnosis made before

and after a journey to Lourdes; we have a right to tell them that their *clumsy hypothesis* of the curative force of a powerful imagination will not account for *cancers* healed in a moment, tumours disappearing instantaneously, decayed and carious bones becoming sound at the touch of that wondrous fountain; we have a right to urge upon them the necessity of furnishing some possible solution of the mystery, or else of honestly and humbly accepting the solution which the whole Catholic world declares with one voice, to be the only rational, the only possible solution—*Digitus Dei est hic*—God it is who, by His miraculous power *exerted* through our Lady's intercession, heals the sick, cures the lame, casts out devils, restores sight to the blind, now, in this nineteenth century, just as He did, when He was visibly present amongst men.

"Out of a large number of instances we adduce three as test cases. They have happened within

the last two years. They have been carefully examined, and as our readers will see, it is absolutely impossible that imagination could have brought them about, as in each case there was either some organic lesion, or else some clearly marked physical malady; affecting and destroying the bodily tissues, and almost incurable, even after long years, by any human means.

“Our first case is that of Mdle. Philippe from Ménil in Lorraine. After suffering from fainting fits and poverty of blood for several years, she was attacked in 1877 by paralysis in her left side, and in the following year two *cancerous* swellings appeared in her throat. An operation was decided upon, which left the lower part of her throat one vast wound. This operation was followed by a second—this by a third—until it became necessary to perform them nearly every week. She became unable to speak, and was subject to frequent spitting of blood. ‘I shall give your sister no more

remedies,' said the physician; 'her case is hopeless' (*elle est perdue*). But Mdle. Philippe, who had already visited Lourdes, had conceived a great desire to go there again before her death. She did not ask to be cured, but to obtain the grace of a good death. At the cost of intense suffering she took the journey, and spent the first night before the Grotto. The next evening as she knelt and prayed, she felt a horrible pain, as if all her sinews were being strained. Was it a new crisis of her disease, or was it the death she had so long prayed for? She fell to the ground, and then, without knowing what she did, she who had been so long speechless, cried out with a loud voice, 'Cured! I am cured!' and set to work at once to sing the 'Magnificat,' accompanied by all around.

"The wound of her *cancers* had disappeared; the skin had become smooth again; *a few little reddish spots alone* marked the place where the sores had been. The next day she was able to walk, carrying

the 'banner in a procession for an hour without fatigue. Since then she has felt no pain; her appetite returned, and her cure proved a lasting one."

We beg the reader to consider what a *cancer*—especially a cancer of the throat, means; a disease which, wherever it manifests itself, infects after a time the whole system. Every medical man will tell him that a large proportion, perhaps the majority of tumours which bear a general resemblance to cancer, are *not* cancer at all. But here we have a woman afflicted with *cancer*, which had affected the tongue in such a manner that she was unable to speak, shouting the "Magnificat," dancing about the place in a fandango of delight, and celebrating an immediate cure of a cureless disease by bearing a banner next day in a so-called religious procession. This is the well-authenticated "test case," previously attested by "a careful *diagnosis*," which a Roman Catholic clergyman—a member we

presume of the Society of Jesus, places before us as an example of a "Modern Miracle"—a miracle moreover which he challenges us to dispute.

But Mr. Clarke's "evidence" is not yet exhausted ; he has to bring before us medical testimony. Let us see what this testimony is worth. "If our readers," he continues, "are not willing to accept the *testimony* [*sic*] of Mdlle. Philippe herself, let us hear what a physician of Montpellier has to say respecting her cure. 'It is not a question in this case,' says M. Vergez, who is attached to the Faculty of Medicine at Montpellier, 'of any nervous affection ; it is on the material injury (*lésion matérielle*) that we must concentrate our attention ; whatever its nature, cancerous or serofulous, *probably the latter*, her cure, like all cures of affections resulting from natural dispositions, required a considerable period of time. The instantaneous cicatrisation of the wounds, or rather the sudden renewal of all the elements constituting the derma

and epidermis, could not belong to the domain of nature's forces.' We invite our readers to a careful consideration of these last words. If the Protestant rejects the hypothesis of a supernatural power *exerted through the intercession of our Lady*, how is he to account for the sudden cure where medical science declared such a cure impossible? He is bound to give us some counter-hypothesis, at least to indicate to us some possible explanation."

That explanation, it appears to us, we shall have no difficulty in giving.

The other two "test cases" with their so-called "evidence" are, so far as their value is concerned, on a par with the one just given, and we forbear therefore to quote them. We have only to add that if this statement had been made to Catholic readers, we should have left the question of the cure by way of "Modern Miracle" untouched, considering it a subject with which we had no concern. As, however, it is addressed to and

specially intended for "non-Catholics"; as it is, moreover, given a place in a periodical of the standing of the *Nineteenth Century*; and as it is put before us non-Catholic readers in the form of a distinct challenge, we are invited of course to answer and to deal with it.

It is one of the peculiarities of the Catholic faith that it exercises so comfortable an influence on the minds of its believers. It imposes on the latter a blind and trusting faith in the *infallibility* of their spiritual guides: it enjoins on them the absolute surrender of their own judgment and common sense to the teaching and doctrines of the Church as expounded by its ministers: it orders them to accept matters not as they find them—not as they present themselves to the eye of a person not brought up and educated in the peculiar dogmas of the faith, but as they are directed to look at them by the priest conductor. Hence it is that the Catholic faith commends itself so specially to



the sympathies of the softer sex—a sex whose nature inclines it to trust to, and lean on what appears to it the stronger mind in matters of spiritual guidance. It is quite easy to understand that on persons so biassed, educated, and directed—taught to believe in the direct manifestation of divine power, exercised at the intercession of “our Lady” or of canonised saints, faith may, and sometimes does, exercise a genuine and powerful influence in the treatment and even the cure of disease. An unwavering faith of this kind is possible of course only to those, the growth of whose religious intelligence has been trained under priestly direction; but this faith is one of the aids which catholicism brings to the help of Nature; and it is astonishing the grasp with which Nature in her efforts to get rid of disease, will lay hold on anything which promises her assistance.

In a previous part of his statement Mr. Clarke tells us that “Modern Miracles are of three kinds:—

1. Those which have been examined by ecclesiastical authority and solemnly approved by the Holy See.

2. Those which have never received any formal approbation at Rome, but have been approved by some subordinate or local authority.

3. Those which have received no recognition or authorisation whatever.

The former class consists of those *miracles* which have been brought before the Sacred Congregation in processes of canonisation, have been carefully and solemnly weighed and scrutinised, and after due scrutiny have been declared proven. After this declaration to deny their genuineness would almost be presumptuous and rash. Every possible precaution is taken against the acceptance of any fact as miraculous for which there is not the clearest and most certain *evidence*. An advocate is appointed to raise all possible objections, and urge them against each separate miracle, and to try and find other explanations by which the facts alleged could be explained; no pains are spared to

admit only such *evidence* as would satisfy, and more than satisfy, a committee of unprejudiced English lawyers."

On this point we join issue with Mr. Clarke: we know something of the nature of "legal evidence," which it is manifest that he does not. The so-called "miracle" he has related to us, so far as *evidence* is concerned, is obviously not worth the paper on which it is printed. Who is Mdlle. Philippe from Ménil in Lorraine? What do we know of her previous history? and where do we find a single scintilla of evidence either of the disease under which she suffered, or of the experiences which she is said to have undergone? Who is M. Vergez, "who is attached to the Faculty of Medicine at Montpellier"? and what is his statement worth? M. Vergez is unable to tell us what was the nature of Mdlle. Philippe's malady: he does not even show us that she was his patient at all. The nature of "the material injury (*lésion*

*matérielle*), . . . whatever its nature, cancerous or scrofulous," under which she suffered, he is utterly unable to explain to us. Mr. Clarke in fact has handed us a brief drawn not from *evidence*, but from second or third-hand statements. It contains of course no "evidence" whatever; nor, assuming it had been evidence "which would satisfy and more than satisfy a committee of unprejudiced English lawyers," does he place us in a position in which we can cross-examine his witnesses, and subject them to a test which, if skilfully conducted, rarely fails to elicit truth.\*

\* After this chapter was written, we met with an article on the subject by Dr. Donkin, from which we quote the following passage :—"Although we are told," says this English physician, "to concentrate our attention on the *material lesion*, we consider that the other symptoms of one-sided paralysis and loss of voice, which disappeared at the Grotto, are of great illustrative importance. For such affections, and such sudden recoveries, are well known to doctors, under the heading of functional nervous disease.

"What therefore was medically most probable to have happened appears to have happened here, according to the internal evidence in the account: while for the medical improbability—the *sudden recovery of the wounds*—there is no internal evidence whatever."—*Fortnightly Review*, August 1883, 267.

So far as the so-called "test case," therefore, is concerned, it is more than easily disposed of. There is in fact "no case" of any kind to answer; and we are gravely asked by Mr. Clarke to pronounce judgment in his favour on a mere *ex parte* statement, which bears on its face the evidence of its own palpable absurdity. In the absence, however, of anything which can be called a "case," we have conceded, that the faith of an ignorant trusting mind is capable at times of assisting the operations of Nature in a manner, which Mr. Clarke might deem "miraculous," but which is capable of the easiest explanation. Sir Thomas Wiseman, physician to Charles the Second, says on the subject of scrofulous complaints, "I must needs profess [admit] that his Majesty cureth more in one year than all the chirurgeons of London have done in any age." The touch of his Majesty's hand, aided by the imagination of the patient, effected undoubtedly much which medical skill had failed to accomplish.

Exactly the same principle is at work at Lourdes, such principle being for obvious purposes attributed by the priest expositor to a saintly influence which has no sort of actual existence. The so-called cures at Lourdes be it observed—and this fact is more than material, are vouchsafed only to "orthodox" believers. Let a practical Protestant mind in a diseased Protestant body, present itself at this same miraculous "Grotto," and if the proprietor return sound and *well*, and if the facts before and after the *cure* are duly certified to by competent English physicians who can be called to verify the facts, then and not till then, Mr. Clarke will be furnished with a "test case" such as he can place at least before English "non-Catholic" readers. As for the test case which he has placed before us, it may be considered satisfactory by the "sacred congregation," but an English lawyer would refuse to listen to it for a moment.

It is one of the consequences of a challenge, that

it should invite attack ; and although we do not for a moment question the honesty of purpose of the challenger, it is necessary in elucidation of our subject that we should carry it further. "Modern Miracleism" is the principal means, by which, in countries where ignorance prevails, a zealous (we were going to say—unscrupulous) priesthood seek to enslave the minds of men, for the advancement of their own order and the interests of their own Church. Such an attempt on the practical minds of Englishmen must lead inevitably to ridicule, and ridicule the Romish Church has more reason to dread than any weapon which can be used against her. With the weak-minded peasantry of Italy, Sicily, and Spain, the case is wholly different ; and with these the principle, *Populus vult decipi, decipiatur* is followed without any attempt at concealment in all its cynical entirety. Only look what the priesthood are now doing during the present eruption of Mount Etna. "The archbishop," we

are told by the correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* (writing under date of May the 27th), "Monsignor Dusmet, is on the spot offering prayers, *addressed chiefly to St. Agatha, the patron saint of the district. The populace who attribute to her miraculous intervention the arrest of the eruption which in 1669 threatened Catania*, urged Monsignor Dusmet to apply to the diocese of Catania for the *temporary loan of this saint's veil*, with a view of repeating the experiment. Yesterday the Bishop entered Nicolosi with great pomp, bearing this veil in an urn. Processions were formed, the veil was exposed, and interminable prayers are being offered in public, leading to incidents of painful interest. For instance, yesterday, during the sacred function, *a poor woman fell fainting to the ground*, and it soon became known that she had not touched food for three days." These are the people by whom "modern miracles" are believed, and the cleric who trusts and may possibly have faith in



them, finds a ready sympathizer in women with equally enfeebled minds and restricted education, who move in a higher sphere in Society. Admitting the honesty and integrity of Mr. Clarke's motives, the process of self-deception must be peculiar, which can induce an educated gentleman, such as he evidently is, to believe, that the arguments he has ventured to propound, can have any influence on the minds of English Protestant readers beyond the creation of a feeling of compassion for one who can avow his belief in a superstition so preposterous. Notwithstanding the fact that "the apparition and miracles at Lourdes [may] have received the explicit sanction of the bishop of the diocese," that simple circumstance will have little influence on the practical mind of honest John Bull.

## CHAPTER XI.

### MEDICINE MANIA.

SOME people, especially among the lower, middle, and the working classes, are confirmed medicine-takers. They read the advertisements of "patent" nostrums, which profess to cure every ill under the sun from agues to ulcers, and implicitly believe the statements which they contain. The ignorant medicine-taker never pauses to consider that if a tithe of the pretensions so blatantly proclaimed had any real foundation in fact, the existence of cultivated and learned bodies, such as the College of Physicians and the College of Surgeons, would be no longer necessary. Not only does he believe everything which the advertisers tell him, but he

becomes an advocate of the remedies to his friends, and thus, like the snow-ball which increases as the school-boy rolls it in the drift, the mischief insensibly increases, until in time it assumes colossal proportions.

The means by which so-called panaceas acquire a reputation is easily explained. "Take," says the author of *Physician and Patient* (we do not mean Mr. Timbs), "any remedy, no matter what, whether it be positive in its operation or wholly inert, and it can be made to acquire an extensive reputation for curing disease. Suppose that it is of a positive character. Let a large number of persons in a community be persuaded to take it. It would be appropriate to a few out of the whole number of cases, just as a man firing into a crowd of men at random would be apt to hit some one of them. Then there are some who, through the renewing power of nature, get well whilst using the medicine, perhaps even in spite of it, and falsely attribute

the cure to it. The many that are not benefited soon give up the use of the remedy, and the fact that they have taken it is known to a few and soon forgotten even by them. But the few that chance to derive benefit from it, or that are cured by nature while taking it, proclaim everywhere the virtues of the remedy, and extol its efficacy by laudatory certificates, for what they falsely term the benefit of their fellow-creatures. The newspapers teem with flaming advertisements. The consequence is that the remedy comes into extensive use, and continues in popular favour, till some other, by the same process, supplants it."

The success obtained by the proprietors of these "universal curers" is proved not only by the colossal fortunes which some of the most persistent of them make, but by the progressive increase in the amount of duty received for stamps, issued to them by the Inland Revenue authorities. Let us take two periods of five years each by way of

example. Between the years 1840 and 1844 inclusive, the sum total received by the Revenue was £149,080 7s. 6½d., or a yearly average of £29,816 1s. 6d. Whereas, in the corresponding period, from 1863 to 1867 inclusive, it had risen to £201,159 8s. 5½d., showing an annual average of £40,231 17s. 8d. Now, if the reader will remember that the stamps are imposed on a graduated scale; that the stamp on a shilling bottle of medicine is only three halfpence; a half-crown ditto, threepence,—he will form some notion of the enormous quantities disposed of by the advertisers on the one hand, and purchased and swallowed by the public on the other. That the practice of medicine taking as indulged in by many of the persons to whom we have alluded is nothing less than a dangerous mania, is shown by the strange case which is stated in the following pages. We have drawn the facts from the evidence; but the actual names of the parties interested in the

proceedings we have, for obvious reasons, thought fit to suppress.

Fifty years ago there lived in London a woman named Hollins. Her ostensible occupation was that of a seamstress, an occupation which she followed at the houses of her patrons, but on the principle advocated by some persons that it is just as well "not to carry all your eggs in one basket," she seems to have combined with her business of a needlewoman that of a vendor of patent medicine. One of the persons who gave her employment was the wife of a merchant captain named Wright. Taking advantage of her opportunities, Hollins in accordance with her custom advocated the remedial virtues of certain pills in which she was interested, and easily persuaded the captain to purchase a box. They appear to have given him so much satisfaction that he was induced to buy eleven shillings' worth, for the purpose of taking with him on an intended voyage to the West Indies:

that voyage, as we shall presently see, the captain never lived to accomplish.

The purchase of that eleven shillings' worth of pills brought on the scene another person whose name, for the purpose of this story, shall be Croot. How Richard Croot came to be connected with Hollins, and what was the precise nature of the connection between the pair, does not appear. We suspect that Croot was an agent for the sale of the patent medicine, and that the woman acted as his go-between and received a percentage on her sales. We are inclined to believe that this was the case for the reason that, although Hollins' name and the part which she took are brought into prominent notice in the events which follow, she does not appear to have been personally implicated in the legal proceedings from which we extract the facts. Whatever might have been the nature of their association in business, the fact that she had sold eleven shillings' worth of pills to Captain John

Wright was speedily communicated by the woman to Croot. Thereupon the latter called at the house, and asked to see the captain, who happened to be absent. He then introduced himself to Mrs. Wright; said he had been requested to call by Hollins; and handed her a card, which gave his address as No. 6, Farringdon Street. He inquired what was the matter with her husband, and she answered with some surprise, "Nothing, that she was aware of." Croot explained the object of his visit, and said he would call again in a day or two. As a matter of fact he did call; saw the captain; and brought the conversation round to the subject of the pills. He cautioned him that he was on no account to take the "No. 2" pills, without also taking the "No. 1." "I am told," he added, "that you were much prejudiced against the pills at first, but you will find that they cure every disease and do a great deal of good:" the minor proposition being



added by way apparently of rounding off the larger one.

Had he attempted thus to force himself upon a man moving in a different sphere of life, "Doctor Croot"—with his major and minor proposition, his pills "No. 1" and "No. 2"—would have been promptly and civilly bowed off the premises; probably in many cases that was the sort of treatment he was accustomed to experience. But, poor John Wright—a guileless sailor-man, a veritable "Captain Cuttle"—instead of feeling resentment, seems to have been impressed with the medical learning and acquirements of his visitor. Hollins's retainer still continued; and to show the vigilant look-out which was maintained by the pair, we may observe that when in the middle of January 1836 the captain complained of an attack of rheumatism in his knee, the "doctor" once more made his appearance. Again he saw Mrs. Wright, and told her he had learnt of her husband's illness through Miss Hollins,

The wife, however, never seems to have been favourably impressed with "Doctor Croot": she told him plainly that it would be well if Hollins attended to her own business; that he had not been sent for; and that his services were not required. This was an answer of which even Richard Croot was bound to take notice, and for that time at least he took his departure.

But the rheumatic pain in the captain's knee instead of subsiding grew worse, and in a few days, by his express desire, the "doctor" was sent for. He came on Wednesday, the 20th of January, 1836; and from that moment Cuttle's fate may be said to have been sealed. Before he left, Croot ordered Mrs. Wright to give her husband twenty of pills "No. 1" *that night*, and twenty of "No. 2" on the following morning "to drive off," as the learned man expressed it, "the number ones." The puzzled wife, whose antipathy to the "doctor" had been unable to prevent his being "called in,"

obeyed only half of these directions—that is to say, she gave her husband that night ten of the “No. 1,” and ten of the “No. 2” on the following morning. Croot called in the early part of next day, and inquired if she had administered “the proper number,” and she said that she had. He told her, she was to increase the number by *five at every dose*, which was to be given night and morning. As a matter of fact, however, she never gave poor Cuttle the full quantity ordered, “but always a great deal less;” and Croot (who called every day but Saturday) suspected the fact, and said he “doubted her much.” She was acting, however, as she seems to have imagined under a doctor’s orders, and sometimes gave the captain as many as *fifteen or twenty* pills at a time: sometimes none at night, but *always* some in the morning. After undergoing this course of “heroic” medicine for a period of five days, with all the results which may be imagined, poor Cuttle arrived

at the conclusion (as he himself expressed it), that "there was something the matter with him worse than his knee." Croot called late on the Monday. Whether he was an orthodox Hebrew, keeping the Sabbath in all its rabbinical strictness, whether he was observing the Sunday as a Christian holiday, or devoting both days to the doctoring of Jews and Gentiles by the impartial administration of pills "No. 1" and "No. 2," does not appear: he did not at any rate make his appearance till the Monday night. When the frightened wife told him the condition of his patient, he merely remarked that she had not administered enough medicine, and had moreover "given him too much to eat." Food—the learned pundit observed—her husband did not require, for the simple reason that "*the fever would feed him without any food.*" This was the sixth day of attendance, and by this time poor John Wright was so woefully prostrated, that the strong, hearty man of six days ago could hardly sit up

in bed. This unmistakable protest of Nature passed unheeded: the "doctor" told the wife to give the patient *hot water and salt*, and ordered more pills, telling her to go on increasing each dose by five. He called on the Tuesday, and being told that the captain was dreadfully ill, assured the wife that she was alarming herself without cause, and that if she would only attend to his directions he would be well in a day or two. The purgative action of course increased in proportion to the continuance and increase of the doses; and, on Wednesday the 29th of January, Mrs. Wright sent in great alarm for Mr. Gay, an old friend of her husband's. When the latter arrived, he found his friend delirious, and immediately called in Mr. Comyns-Smith, a qualified medical practitioner, and explained to him the course of treatment. Mr. Comyns-Smith saw the patient the same day, and Croot called twice; the first call being made after the qualified practitioner had taken his departure. The latter did not administer

any medicine, feeling (if we are to judge by his evidence) that the patient was in a state when no medicine would have given him relief. This, however, was not the opinion of Dr. Croot: he told the wife to give her delirious husband twenty-five pills that night, "they will compose him," he said, "to sleep, and he will be better in the morning." When the criminal idiot (who does not seem to have been aware of the surgeon's visit) called at ten o'clock that night, he found the wife-crying by her sick husband's bed-side, and actually assured her she "had no cause for alarm," as the patient "was doing well." She told him that a medical man had seen him, and had pronounced him to be in very great danger, to which he angrily made answer, that if a medical man ventured to interfere with his treatment, he should turn him out of the house. In spite of the wife's protest, he then and there administered twenty-five of his drastic pills, and told her to give her husband thirty or thirty-

six of "No. 2" in the morning. It shows the ascendancy which this man had obtained over her, that in spite of her dislike to him, in spite of the warning she received from the qualified practitioner, she did actually give the patient twenty pills the following morning.

The ascendancy indeed, which the dangerous ignoramus exercised over his victim and his wife, is one of the strangest circumstances in connection with this strange case. Scarcely less extraordinary is the fact that, although the treatment which was being pursued had been explained to him; although he perfectly well knew the captain was being poisoned by inches, the weak-kneed practitioner did not interpose his professional authority, and turn the criminal empiric and his poisonous pill-boxes out of the house: such an exercise of authority, even at this time, would not have been too late.

Croot came again on the Thursday, and Mrs. Wright told him as she always had done, the

dangerous condition of her husband; but Croot's cry was "pills! more pills!" and he asked more-over to see the pill-boxes. They were empty, the victim having swallowed in nine days the whole eleven shillings' worth which he had purchased of Hollins. He said he would call on this woman and order more. It was vain for the wife to remonstrate, and to remind the irrepressible quack that a medical practitioner had ordered that the pills were to be discontinued; he said he would administer one hundred at a time if he considered them necessary. The wife drew his attention to the unfortunate man's terribly reduced condition, but Croot was ready with his answer. "I must," he said, "take off the flesh before I can raise him up." He ordered her to administer *thirty-two* pills at three o'clock that day. It was vain to tell him that her husband "was continually throwing them up and throwing up blood also;" he merely repeated his orders and said he would have them



sent. Hollins made her appearance at three o'clock that day, and brought not only another parcel of pills, but a box of powders, for both of which the foolish Mrs. Wright paid her thirteen shillings and fourpence. It is worthy of note that at this time some brandy and water was offered to the patient, but he was too weak to swallow it, notwithstanding which, the miserable impostor intent on following out his dreadful system, called on Friday at ten with two powders in paper. He mixed these with water—one being of darker colour than the other. On being asked what these powders were composed of, he said they were *pounded pills*. He desired Mrs. Wright to raise her husband up, which she did. The wretched man was so weak that he could scarcely move. The quack put the cup to his lips, and the sick man swallowed the contents, which he immediately threw up together with a quantity of blood, a fact which did not in the least disconcert Croot. The sick

man however interposed. "My dear," he said, "it is poison! this man has poisoned me!" Gay called at this moment, and sent up a message, expressing his wish to see both Croot and Mrs. Wright.

The advent of Gay forms a new episode in the story. This gentleman was a very different person from either poor Captain John Wright or his wife, and for the first time, perhaps in his life, Richard Croot found himself in a position for which he was wholly unprepared. Nemesis in the person of Mr. Gay stood before him; and a series of interrogatives followed, which made him feel more than uncomfortable.

The first question—a very inconvenient one—"For what disease was he treating the patient?" was parried with an assertion: "The medicine he was administering would eradicate every disease, and the captain would rise from his bed a better man than before." He added by way of parenthesis and justification, that he was in the habit of

administering the medicine to his wife and children. The question, whether he considered his patient in a condition of body and mind when drastic medicine could be safely or properly administered, he answered with his usual effrontery. Asked whether he was a duly qualified medical man, he answered in the affirmative. On being asked to produce his "certificate," he replied that "it was unusual for *medical men* to carry their diplomas about with them." To the question, "where did he live?" he answered—somewhat vaguely,—“in the City.” By this time however, his demoralization was complete, and he availed himself of the earliest opportunity to take himself off, while Gay went in search of the qualified practitioner. Croot's mental uneasiness brought him back the same night; and notwithstanding the strict orders which had been given, he managed to force his way upstairs. His reception was anything but encouraging: the sick man ordered him to be gone. “You will be paid,” he said in his homely

language, and with much difficulty, "for your trouble, but you have poisoned me—you have poisoned me right out." Hearing from Mrs. Wright that a physician would call the next day, he assured her that her friends were alarming her needlessly, and that there was no necessity whatever for calling in a medical man. At this moment Gay and Thomas Riley (a merchant captain) made their appearance, and Croot once more found himself subjected to a searching if not a very skilful examination. He called again on the next day, and brought with him a person whom he introduced as "Dr. Wynch," but neither were permitted to go upstairs. This was on the Saturday: all that day and the following the patient kept growing rapidly weaker; and at three o'clock on the Monday morning—thirteen days after Croot had been first called in,—poor John Wright had gone over to the Great Majority.

A post mortem examination followed as a matter

of course, and the result will be found in the medical evidence, which we prefer to give in its entirety. The immediate result of the coroner's inquest was, the arrest and committal of Richard Croot who, on the 6th of April 1836, was placed at the bar of the Central Criminal Court, charged with "having caused the death of John Wright, by having administered to him, on the 20th of January, and at other times, large and excessive quantities of pills composed of portions of gamboge, cream of tartar, and other articles of a noxious, destructive, and deleterious description, he having no knowledge of medicine, and having no license to sell or administer such medicine." The facts which led up to this inevitable result, we have extracted from the evidence of Anne Wright, the widow, and Henry Kimber Gay, the friend of the deceased.

Thomas Riley, a captain in the merchant service deposed that he had known the deceased, Captain

John Wright, for nine years, and always as a man of temperate habits. This witness corroborated the evidence of the widow and Mr. Gay as to the prisoner having represented himself to be a medical man. He heard the prisoner complain that the friends of the deceased were "crossing him in his treatment of Captain Wright." The witness had refused to allow the prisoner to go up-stairs to the deceased. He said he would call next day with Dr. Wynch. Both of them did call, but neither were permitted to see the deceased. In cross-examination the witness said, "there was an actual appointment between prisoner and Wynch, Dr. Roberts and Mr. Comyns-Smith for the next day at one o'clock. The prisoner on that occasion earnestly begged that Dr. Wynch should be permitted to go up-stairs to see the deceased," but this was refused.

Alfred Comyns-Smith, surgeon and apothecary, being sworn, described the condition in which he

found the deceased, in a manner which corroborated the evidence of the previous witnesses. The deceased could scarcely breathe and spoke with much difficulty. He told the witness how he had been treated, complained of his knee, and above all, of pains "in the pit of the stomach." He examined his knee, and found that he was suffering from a rheumatic affection. That affection had nothing whatever to do with the disorder in the stomach. Having been told the sort of medicine he had been taking, *he did not order it to be discontinued, "as he had no charge that would authorize him to do so;"* but he expressed his opinion that the treatment, if continued, would prove fatal. He also advised chicken broth, "to try and restore the tone of the stomach." When he called on Friday (29th of January), he found him much worse. He lay still, with his eyes half closed, his pulse was weak; his breath faint; and it was his (the witness's) opinion, that he would

shortly die. The witness declined acting without another opinion, and Dr. Roberts was in consequence called in; "but deceased was not then in a condition to take medicine." On the Saturday night he became worse, and the witness did not think that "any medicine in the world would at that time have relieved him." He understood that the pills were composed of portions of gamboge and aloes, and other ingredients. He had heard cream of tartar and assafoetida spoken of as other component parts. There had been a post mortem examination, and the stomach was found inflamed and ulcerated. There was at the bottom of the stomach, near the lower opening, a patch of ulceration larger than a shilling. If the deceased had taken the quantities of medicine described, it would account for the "appearances" he had witnessed, and which, he said, had caused death.

In answer to the court, the witness explained that the ulceration *must* have been of recent



occurrence; it could not have been of three months' standing. In his opinion it had commenced on the Friday (29th January). The appearance which he had found in the stomach would account for death. *Mucus* such as he had seen, and in such quantities, would not have passed without some strong, exciting cause.

In cross-examination by Sir Frederick Pollock, the witness said that he had not advised any medicines, because he thought they would be improper in the condition in which he found the deceased. He thought that the medicines named if mixed and administered in large quantities, would produce the effects in the stomach which he had described. He thought, too, that twenty pills of gamboge and aloes would produce vomiting and purging. He admitted that he himself had administered ten grains of aloes at a time, and three grains of gamboge at a time. He also admitted that when gamboge, aloes, cream of tartar, and

assafœtida were mixed, he could not tell the precise quantity at which the dose would cause danger to commence, and safety to end. He was of opinion that ten grains of White's pills, supposing them to be composed of aloes and gamboge, would be a strong dose: twenty would be dangerous, and if taken night and morning highly so; much, however, depended on the constitution of the patient. He did not know the difference between pills "No. 1," and pills "No. 2;" but those which had the largest quantity of gamboge would be the strongest. If each pill contained half a grain of gamboge, with ten grains of aloes, it would be an over-dose. He thought thirty of such pills night and morning for two or three days, would be an improper dose to take. If ten persons were to take such doses for several days together, at least two or three of them would die; "and if it was stated by persons, that they had taken such doses for a long time, either such

statements must be false, or else witness's theory must be wrong." He never found that a small dose of aloes would cause irritation, when a larger one would not. He had administered aloes in doses of from one to ten grains, and gamboge in doses of from one to three grains. He had heard Mrs. Wright's evidence, and had heard her say she had given a smaller number of pills than the prisoner had ordered, and that she sometimes kept back pills "No. 1" at night, and gave pills "No. 2" in the morning. He had also heard her say that "No. 2" ought not to be taken without "No. 1." "He thought it would not be fair to judge of the effect of medicine so administered." On re-examination, the witness stated it to be his opinion that "a competent medical man could on the Wednesday (27th of January) have told that there was inflammation of the stomach, and would not have administered two spoonfuls of the pills powdered on the Thursday and Friday. Such a dose would

produce the symptoms he witnessed in the stomach of the deceased, and was likely to cause death."

Dr. Frederick Roberts, Physician to the London Hospital, deposed that he saw the deceased on the Saturday, two days before his death, and was informed that he had taken a large quantity of White's pills. He directed a mustard poultice to be applied to the pit of the stomach, and ordered a mucilage and some chicken-broth to be given to him. The object of the mucilage was merely to sustain life; no medicines were administered, though enemata of strong beef-soup with small quantities of brandy were given. He attended the post mortem examination of the body on Monday (1st of February). The liver was rather large and congested, but there was no active disease; the pericranium was free from inflammation or other disease; the stomach much contracted; the middle of the great curvature exceedingly inflamed, with two spots of ulceration—one the size of a shilling; the mucous

membrane of the intestinal canal was inordinately injected with dark-coloured blood; in the *ileum* and *jejunem* the mucous membrane had the appearance of lymph effused within its substance, and greatly softened; in other parts the membrane was so thin as to give it the appearance of ulcerated destruction\*. In the *cæcum* and *colon* was a mass of yellow pulpy matter, mixed with feculent matter. On opening the knee-joint, there was an effusion of lymph. The head was loaded, but not seriously diseased. There was abundant appearance in the stomach to account for death, *but in no other part of the body*. Taking large quantities of drastic medicine would produce such appearances. He had heard Mrs. Wright's evidence. He thought the dose described by her to have been administered to the deceased on the Friday—of two table-spoonfuls of White's pills in powder—highly improper, and was of opinion that no man of competent skill would have administered it. It required a nicety

of judgment to discover the presence of inflammation, as it did in most internal diseases; but any person of competent skill, seeing the deceased on the Saturday, must have known that he was labouring under some destructive mischief to a vital organ, and that in such case it was highly improper to continue the previous course of medicine. If the medicines of which he had heard, had been administered in the quantities described, they would be quite sufficient to account for death. He could name no medicine, the good effects of which were increased in proportion to the increased quantity taken.

In answer to the court, Dr. Roberts said there was no medicine of which too large a dose might not be given. It was unfair to judge of the effects of medicine where the whole quantity prescribed was not administered. "To tell Croot under such circumstances that the full quantity had been taken would be likely to mislead him, and induce him to

increase the dose when he found that the effect he expected had not been produced." This witness was not cross-examined.

Mr. Philip Pemberton, lecturer on chemistry at St. Thomas's Hospital said, he had analysed some of the pills in question: they were of different sizes and colours. No. 1 consisted of cream of tartar and aloes; there was a smaller quantity of another substance, the nature of which he had not had time to ascertain; he at first thought it was colocynth. The larger or No. 2 pill consisted of aloes, gamboge, cream of tartar, and another substance which he had not had time to discover. He did not know the proportions of any of the medicines used. His assistant, Thomas Sparks Saffold, further deposed that both the pills No. 1 and No. 2 contained a little assafoetida, but could not tell the proportions of any of the ingredients: with the evidence of these two witnesses, the case for the prosecution closed.

Notwithstanding that he was represented by a professional gentleman of the reputation of Sir Frederick Pollock, not the least strange part of this extraordinary case—to ourselves at least, is the fact, that the prisoner was permitted to read a long defence which he had committed to paper; while a revelation was made by the witnesses called in support of his case which will, we believe, prove both novel and astonishing to the majority of our readers.

John Morgan, a stone-mason, said he knew White's pills. "He was ill about three years ago when he first began taking them. He commenced with three, and increased them *up to fifteen a night. He continued taking them for ten months. He had taken thirty at night, and thirty in the morning, for as long as four days together.* After that, he reduced the number to twenty at night, and twenty in the morning. *In twenty days he had taken one thousand pills, or fifty a day.* He



found great benefit from them, but never so much, or indeed hardly any, until he had taken the large doses, which he did by the prisoner's advice. His health was now restored. The prisoner took no fee for the benefits he had conferred upon him." In cross-examination, it was elicited that the complaint under which this witness had suffered was "*a general debility.*"

The revelations of Richard Cramp, landlord of the Harp Tavern, Harp Lane, Thames Street, were of a still more astonishing character. This unhappy witness, according to his own account, had been afflicted "with the scurvy and fistula," and had taken medicines under the advice of a surgeon without deriving the slightest benefit. In a happy moment he began taking White's pills, commencing with the infinitesimal dose of five. Their beneficial effect was such that he was encouraged to proceed, and he proceeded accordingly, and found after taking forty a day (that is to say, twenty night

and morning), that they were doing him incalculable good. He knew this was the fact, because when he reduced the doses, "he invariably became ill again." He consulted the prisoner, and the result was that he took by his advice "*one hundred pills in one day, and frequently ninety in one day.*" This terrific cannonade drove away of course scurvy—fistula—every possible or impossible ailment, and he was now in a state of the most perfect health. We might have forgiven a witness who admitted that he took pills by the hundred a day but for the statement with which he concluded his evidence. He said, "his wife and children took the pills and" (strange to say) "were benefited by them."

The wonders went on increasing with the appearance of each fresh witness. Janet Peregrine swore that she had been seriously ill, and had taken as many as a hundred and twelve pills in one day notwithstanding which, she "could eat her break-

fast and work hard all day afterwards without suffering any inconvenience. She was now cured and well." Upwards of *thirty* other persons, among them "a surgeon" (?) a clergyman,—persons of all classes in fact came forward, and asserted that they had been afflicted with gout, rheumatism, fistula, scurvy, and all manner of disorders, and had each and all been cured by taking "White's pills, after having sought relief in vain from the prescriptions of qualified medical men. They swore too, that they generally found relief from taking large quantities at a time. One enthusiastic person avowed that he had taken a hundred in twenty-four hours, whilst another shone pre-eminently above his fellows by having swallowed twenty thousand (for which he had paid only £22) in the short space of two years. Whatever might have been the value of the evidence of persons of this intellectual standard, it certainly exonerated the prisoner from all suspicion of mere mercenary

motives: they all agreed in saying that he made no charge against them either for attendance or advice. Probably, the quantity of pills which these stupid people were prepared to swallow, amply paid him for his professional services. The counsel for the prisoner said he had upwards of forty other witnesses, but "thought it unnecessary to call them," an opinion in which the jury and the learned judge gaspingly coincided.

Mr. Justice Pattison said all that was left for him to say after these astounding revelations, and concluded his summing up by advising the jury, that it was, under all the circumstances, a question for their consideration, whether upon the facts disclosed by the evidence on both sides, the prisoner was or was not guilty of the offence imputed to him. The jury after a consultation of a few minutes, expressed their wish to retire. In twenty minutes' time they returned into court, and pronounced a verdict of guilty, but recommended the

prisoner to mercy, on the ground of his being not the compounder, but only the vendor of the pills. The sentence was that he should pay a fine of £200.

The death of Wright was caused not of course by the pills, but by the enormous quantities in which they were administered by an empiric, ignorant of their composition and of their physiological effects. The dangerous principle was *gambooge* which, if administered in large and continuous doses, will produce the symptoms described—violent vomiting and purging, abdominal pain and tenderness, cold extremities, and sinking pulse. We assume that the “directions” given with the medicine (which we have never seen), would scarcely authorise its being taken or administered in the preposterous quantities mentioned in the preceding case; but if the directions do countenance any such “heroic” course of administration, all we can say is that nearly eighty persons—none of them perhaps men-

tally very strong—appear to have been willing to come forward and testify, that the benefit they derived was in proportion to the quantities taken. Like all quacks, ignorant of the properties, physiological effects, and therapeutics of medicines, “Doetor” Croct relied upon *his* experience, represented by the eighty persons with cast-iron stomachs, each of whom (if his or her testimony is to be believed) was capable of swallowing, without injury, drastic physic in quantities which would have slaughtered a hippopotamus. Few will be inclined to pity him; and any allowance we might be disposed to make on account of his ignorance is withdrawn, when we remember that he tried to pass himself off as a qualified practitioner, as soon as his ignorant pretence to a knowledge of the art of healing had led him into serious trouble. Possibly his experience may have made him more cautious, and in this sense, but in no other, may have done him good. It is one of the peculiarities of ignorance that it

remains unconvinced to the end of the chapter ; and possibly to the day of his death, Richard Croot, in spite of the melancholy ending of poor Captain John Wright, sang (probably in more subdued tones) the praises of a remedy, which in his judgment "cured all diseases, and did a great deal of good."

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE QUACKERY OF AMERICAN SPIRITUALISM.

IN one of Gillray's happiest caricatures, (published on the 11th of November, 1801,) he deals an admirable blow at the swinish habits of our great-grandfathers. A year or two before, there had come over from Connecticut, an impudent hump-backed impostor calling himself "Dr. Perkins," who professed to cure inflammatory diseases by means of his "metallic tractors," an early development of that most profitable of all quack inventions—"magnetism." The reputed discovery made (as all these worthless discoveries do make) a great sensation at starting; the public were advertised that they could be supplied with "Perkins's patent Tractors" at five



guineas the set; and the sale went merrily on, until it was discovered in process of time, that spurious "tractors," made of wood, coloured to imitate the original metal ones, were equally efficacious. This was just the cue that James Gillray wanted. Everywhere around him he beheld the pimply noses, the blotched faces, the huge paunches, the colossal limbs of men who inflamed their blood with punch and port-wine; and he represented Perkins the quack doctor, extracting from the grog-blossomed nose of poor John Bull, some of the stores of alcohol which for years past had been accumulating in his system. The spirit issues from the patient's red-hot proboscis in jets of fire; and the pain—but more especially the terror under which he suffers, are depicted in Gillray's most felicitous manner.

If the American travellers who annually find their way to these shores, include among them a number of cultivated ladies and gentlemen, with them come over from time to time types of a

widely different class, who regard the world—more especially the world of England—as their “oyster” which, notwithstanding the clumsiness of the operators and the transparent flimsiness of their pretensions, they manage to open with a success which is rather more than wonderful. Some of our “American Cousins,” as they are oftentimes termed, apparently on the ground that they are so unlike ourselves, indulge, it must be admitted, in singular vagaries. The late Mr. Hepworth Dixon and the late Artemus Ward have told us of the “Spiritual Wives”—of the objectionable people called “Mormons”—of the odd people termed “Shakers”—of the other peculiar and innumerable moral monstrosities, who find room in America to air their extraordinary doctrines. Happily, we have no place for extravagancies of this kind in England; and although the strange folk who call themselves the “Salvation Army” have succeeded in effecting a temporary lodgment, common sense will in the end prevail; and even

now their uneducated dupes begin to ask themselves whether they shall be marched straight to heaven by "General Booth," at the head of his fife and drum band. Foremost, however, among the eccentricities of American "Civilization" we may name *Spiritualism*, a trade or calling which, as we shall endeavour to prove, stands at the very apex of brazen and blundering quackery.

When an American "medium" of very small intellectual powers, conspired with disembodied spirits to extract a trifle of something like sixty thousand pounds out of the pocket of a silly Englishwoman unfit to be entrusted with a thousandth part of the money, the general impression produced upon the minds of unbelievers was that the conspirators, whether embodied or disembodied, were singularly audacious in their operations. This case, combined with the fact that two or three other clumsy conjurers got into trouble, by practising upon the

credulity of their dupes, had an unfortunate effect upon the fortunes of "Spiritualism" in England. Unbelievers made up their minds that American "Spiritualists," men and women, were a set of clumsy knaves, a conclusion which appears to us too sweeping to be altogether just or correct. If there are—as we know there are—Spiritualists who are little better than swindlers, there are, on the other hand, American women and even American men who place unlimited faith in what they are pleased to term the *truths* of Spiritualism. Experience has shown us that human credulity is prepared to swallow, at the hands of unlearned and unskilful teachers, delusions of the most extravagant character. It seems to us, therefore, less important to inquire *why* this should be the case, than to demonstrate by reference to one of their own authorities, the extravagance and absurdity of the doctrines in which these ignorant persons ask us to believe.

Among the "mediums" who contrived to earn a notoriety in this country a few years ago, was Susan Willis Fletcher, the wife of John William Fletcher, also an American "medium" and mesmerist. Although this lady's experiences of *séances* in England were unfortunate, and ended with a sentence of twelve months' hard labour, we have arrived at the conclusion that her own belief in the *truth* of the manifestations which she and her husband professed to experience and interpret, was genuine and sincere. After undergoing her sentence, Mrs. Fletcher published in America,\* a wild, ungrammatical, rhapsodical book, in which she related the events of her life. From this work, little of which we believe is known in this country beyond the limited sphere of "Spiritualism" itself, and scarcely anything at all in the provinces, we have gleaned the information which we have embodied in the following pages.

\* Lee & Shephard, Boston ; and Charles T. Dillingham, New York.

The education and training of an American female of the class to which Mrs. Fletcher belongs, differs altogether from anything which is known to us in this country. The parents of Mrs. Fletcher were Baptists, and the father a "believer" in Spiritualism. She tells us that at one of the *séances* at which she was present—then a child of twelve years old, her "body became possessed by, or came under the control of an Indian Spirit." Imagine any English parent encouraging in the growing mind of his child, a delusion at once so degrading and so terrible! It appears that this mentally unhealthy family were then living in a part of Massachusetts which had at one time been inhabited by North American Indians, and the "poor little body" of our informant "was taken possession of, greatly against her will, by fierce Indian warrior chiefs." Three years afterwards, the child Susan was married to a man named Willis, son of her father's "first medium;" her first child being born when she was

only "sixteen years old." One night, when the baby ("two months and six days old") was lying on her lap, the wretched mother fell asleep, or into one of her dreadful "trances;" the child fell from her "lap upon the floor, and went into convulsions." This was on a Saturday. On the Monday "he put out his hand" [this babe of two months and eight days], "patted my cheek, and said, 'Mamma, mamma,' and with one little gasp was dead." We make no comment on this statement beyond the fact that carelessness (which must painfully impress the mind of any English mother), does not appear to have affected in any degree the mind of Mrs. Fletcher herself. She indulges in a rhapsody with reference to a subsequent colloquy with angels, which we think it unnecessary to repeat in this place. Intellectually at this time at least, Mrs. Fletcher seems to have been only fitted to have been the inmate of an asylum; and to this place in England she would have probably been consigned,

until such time as her mind had recovered from the unwholesome influences to which it had been subjected from infancy.

We are not surprised to learn that a marriage contracted under such circumstances should prove an unhappy one. The "medium" Willis, developed in the course of four years into an irreclaimable and immoral sot. Our informant tells us the result with all the *insouciance* of a woman who had received the training we have attempted to describe. "After an illness of seventeen weeks caused," she says, "by my husband's misconduct, I felt compelled to sue for a divorce, and after a season obtained my legal emancipation." There was no necessity of course for telling us the cause of her divorce; and we repeat it for the purpose only of showing the uneducated class of women from which American spiritualistic "mediums" are often recruited. The removal of Willis makes room for the appearance of her second husband, John William



Fletcher, a male "medium," as we shall find, of singular power and ability.

It is the custom of the Spiritualists to hold "camp-meetings" every summer in many parts of America, in imitation of the so-called religious camp-meetings, so amusingly ridiculed, greatly to the mortification of our American friends, by the late Mrs. Trollope. Some beautiful grove by a river, lake, the sea, or the mountain-side is selected, where tents or temporary buildings are run up. In some spots which are favourite localities for these prolonged pic-nics, hotels have been built for the accommodation of the numerous visitors. "Mediums" assemble from all parts; *séances* are held in the tents; "the grove resounds with singing; and there are lectures, trance-addresses," etc., at fixed and stated hours. At one of the camp-meetings in which the ex-Mrs. Willis took part, she tells us that John William Fletcher was "a favourite medium and speaker." Although she was at that time

engaged to a man, whose practical mind might have exercised a beneficial influence upon her own she renewed her acquaintance with Fletcher, "wandered with him into a quiet and secluded grotto, where the medium became [conveniently] controlled by his spirit guide, *Winona*." American spirits are afflicted by it observed with a chronic contempt for Lindley Murray. The "spirit guide" (speaking of course through the clairvoyant "medium"), assured the credulous creature that she would never marry the man to whom she was then engaged. The reason the spirit assigned was, that her sensible *affiancé* "will try to compel you to break off your work for Spiritualism. You will not consent. You will marry a medium." On being requested to describe the medium she was destined to marry, the spirit, still speaking through the clairvoyant Fletcher, very accurately described that innocent and unconscious individual. "You will marry him," the spirit continued with impressive

fervour. "In five years you will tell me that my prediction was true." All things are fair, they say, "in love and in war;" and this was the strange method by which John Willam Fletcher wooed and won his bride. In arranging matters which suited his personal interest, the "spirit control" of John William will be pronounced by those who read the volume before us, a singularly valuable ally.

Fletcher's belongings were found scarcely satisfactory. Mrs. Fletcher's father-in-law (whom our informant "truly loved") although a married man, resolutely "refused to give up the *society* of one whom he had known for years, and of whom his wife [Fletcher's mother] was furiously jealous." Why we are told this does not appear, except that it is our informant's custom to be explicit on all matters of detail relevant or otherwise. The domestic misunderstanding with this highly moral father-in-law, seems to have broken up the family circle, and John William set out on his travels

with his young wife and his spiritual stock-in-trade. At Mount Pleasant, near Boston, Mrs. Fletcher was favoured with the visit of an ancient "Egyptian spirit, venerable and wise," who predicted (among other interesting matters) that the pair would cross the Atlantic. The Egyptian concluded his prophecy in the following impressive words:—"Beware, the day of your trial [referring possibly to the Central Criminal Court] will be [*sic*] at hand. From this time for two years will be the crisis of your life, and your whole future will depend on the trust you place in us [spirits—Egyptian, Indian, or otherwise], your fidelity to us, and your courage. You will be publicly disgraced; you will be imprisoned for the *truth's* sake; but do not falter. Remember always that God understands, and that even in this world your rights will be restored, and your characters vindicated." It is remarkable that in all their private manifestations the "spirits," whether Red Indian,

Egyptian, Coptic, or Chinese, invariably spoke English, English that is to say of a distinctly uneducated character, and with a pronounced nasal intonation.

The mode in which the "crisis" manifested and unfolded itself may be very shortly glanced at. In England, unfortunately for themselves, the pair met with a lady—one of those impressionable persons without whose patronage the spiritual profession would long since have retired from business. She was not only a regular attendant on their *séances*, but she came ultimately to reside with them, and, if the statement of Mrs. Fletcher is to be believed, forced herself upon their domestic society. There is no doubt that they exercised great influence over her; and according to her sworn testimony, she was induced under the direction or with the consent of her dead mother (as she supposed) conveyed to her through the medium of the entranced John William, to give up to them certain valuable jewels

and property for the exclusive benefit of Mrs. Fletcher. The account given by the latter of this transaction is laboured and entirely unsatisfactory. According to her statement she acted simply as a sort of trustee for the prosecutrix, holding the property on her behalf, to be given up to her on demand; but she admits, nevertheless, the preparation of a certain "deed of gift," which transferred the property unconditionally to herself, such deed being drawn up by a friend residing with them at the time, a Yankee lawyer,—one of these countless American "Colonels," who stand in the eminently unmilitary republic in the proportion of one thousand to every "full" American private. A great deal more was brought out in the evidence than we consider it necessary or desirable to refer to in this place, it being our object not to attack the character or the actions of individuals, but to expose the fraud of "Spiritualism" itself. All this of course was unfortunate. As might have been

expected sooner or later the affectionate relationship of the parties was terminated by a violent quarrel; the English lady fell into the hands of a "medium" hostile to the interests of the Fletchers, and friendship was blown to the winds. She hastened back to England [the parties were at this stage in America] in company with the rival medium, obtained a search-warrant, and took possession of the transferred property and effects. A warrant of arrest was moreover obtained, which included the names of the Fletchers and of the "Colonel," against whom there would appear to have been no sort of "case." It says everything for the courage and the honesty of the female defendant, that on knowing such warrant was issued, she took the first steamer to England and surrendered herself to full inquiry. Mrs. Fletcher returned alone, John William decided not to follow her, a fact which must not be accepted as any admission of guilt, but rather a refusal

to submit to the jurisdiction of the English Court.

This surrender, we are told, was made in the cause of "truth"—the truth that is to say of "Spiritualism." But the charge was a "false pretence," the pretence of the property having been transferred under the direction, or at least with the consent of the prosecutrix's late mother—a disembodied *spirit*; and Mrs. Fletcher complains that English law did not admit on her behalf, evidence to prove that the disembodied spirit was *actually* present, moving John William to convey messages from herself to her daughter. The prisoner found herself on the horns of a dilemma for which, according to her, English law had provided no means of extrication; and she contends that the accused, being included in one indictment, no one or more of the prisoners could be called on behalf of the others. Assuming that they could have been so called—assuming that for that purpose they had



applied (*as they might have done*) to be tried on separate indictments, what possible benefit, we may ask, would the prisoners have obtained from such a course? The accused must establish one of two things: either that the shade of the prosecutrix's mother was actually present (a difficult matter to prove to the satisfaction of an *English* jury), or they must prove that they themselves were deceived, an awkward admission to make so far as the interests of Spiritualism are concerned.

But although the case had terminated in a sentence of twelve months' imprisonment and hard labour, Mrs. Fletcher was by no means discouraged. The English law and the English lawyers were to learn what a very serious thing it is to put an American "medium" into an English prison. The spirits had prepared our martyr—and to some extent we do consider this strange woman a martyr—for the approaching trial. "A few nights," she tells us, "before I was sentenced, I was visiting

with [*sic*] some friends ; Mr. H. Bastian, the medium was one of them, and we had what is called a *séance*. Several spirits came and talked with us. One whom I have often seen and heard and *felt*, and whom I recognize as one of the sweetest and loveliest, wisest and best, came in her beautiful form, and beckoned to me to come near to her. I went forward and sat upon a sofa, when she came and put the *soft white veil* that covered her head also over mine, kissed me on both eyelids, and gave me some words of comfort to strengthen me for the coming trial." Who this interesting spirit might have been, Mrs. Fletcher most provokingly will not say. "In her earthly life," she tells us, "she had experienced misfortunes . . . to which mine have been the merest trifles. She was maligned, imprisoned for many years, and then judicially murdered. I will not give her name ; but I felt greatly honoured by her recognition and friendship, and hoped I should

suffer my small inconveniences in some measure as she did her great martyrdom." Who might this distinguished female spirit have been? We can only think of two who in any way answer to the description, and they were cousins, Mary Queen of Scots, "judicially murdered" by Queen Elizabeth, and the Lady Arabella Stuart, who died in the Tower, the judicial victim of James the First. Oh, Mr. Justice Hawkins! how different your "charge" might have been, had you been conscious that the eyes of Mary of Scotland or of the Lady Arabella were indignantly fixed upon you!

The spirits we need not say "looked up" Mrs. Fletcher. "When the warder opened the door of the cell . . . I saw the radiantly beautiful form of a woman pass in . . . before me . . . turn round, and stretch out her arms to receive me. She wore a long rosary and crucifix at her girdle [Mrs. Fletcher it will be remembered had been brought

up a Baptist]. She held out a crucifix to me. *I fell on my kness, took it in my fingers, and kissed it.* It was as tangible as any I ever touched [*sic*]. Then she said, 'You enter under the shadow of the cross: you will go out into the sunshine. Meditate well upon the Passion of our Lord, for when next you celebrate it, your hour will have come.' " What all this meant, and whether it was Mary of Scotland or the Lady Arabella who delivered it, we have been unable to discover.

The miracles which were vouchsafed in favour of this "medium" martyr—this victim of the tyranny of Mr. Justice Hawkins and his unspiritual English jury—are too numerous to mention. The fate of poor Mrs. Fletcher seems to have created quite an excitement in the world of spirits. Spirits hitherto debarred from communicating with their friends, took advantage of the opportunity to convey messages of comfort to those near and dear to them. One day, during service in the Catholic

chapel, "The raps that came about me were so loud and frequent, that my warder thought some of the women were making them, and peered about, and watched them. While she was doing this, I *mentally* asked who was making the raps; and calling over the letters of the alphabet, the letters marked by the raps spelled [out] this [sepulchral] message: '*This warder is my wife. Tell her that I am not dead, but here, and this place will seem to her less dreadful.*'" The fact that Mrs. Fletcher, without pens, ink, pencil, or paper, was able to put together and formulate this message, seems to us the least astonishing part of the interesting episode. What an illimitable subject of speculation it would seem to open up! Imagine the number of unhappy ghosts with the English alphabet at their fingers' ends, who, in the absence of a "medium" accustomed to their wants and wishes, are debarred from rapping out a syllable of comfort to their embodied relicts!

At this stage we pause like the doubting juryman to "ask a question," which may not be considered altogether irrelevant. Mrs. Fletcher gives us to understand that the mediums perform a double office. In the first place, spirits manifest themselves only in the presence of "Mediums" (a fact of very considerable significance); and in the next place, there is (as there should be) a regular spiritual etiquette, any breach of which is followed by absolute silence. The medium being called to "attention" by a ghostly rap, begins to mumble his alphabet like a "paternoster." The letters speaking the message which the spirit wishes to convey, are indicated by "raps;" and these letters being put together on a slate, the spiritual message is complete. Apparently forgetting this statement, Mrs. Fletcher tells us in several places that the spirits came and sat down beside her, *kissed* her, held out crucifixes to her, and spoke just in the same way that one embodied person speaks to his

fellow. How are we to reconcile this transparent contradiction? If Mrs. Fletcher tells us that the spirit reveals itself to the medium and to the medium alone, our obvious question will be: Why should the spirit speak directly to the "medium" in the one case, *and when other people (not mediums)* are present, by means only of "raps"?

Possibly the reader may be getting a little tired of this; but he must remember that there were certain Englishmen not entirely bereft of understanding, who were foolish enough to be deluded by these stupid people; that there are thousands of American men and women who at this moment believe in what they are pleased to term the *truths(?) of Spiritualism*. The vagaries which the spirits practised in her Majesty's gaol of Clerkenwell (unknown of course to the warders), distance by "long chalks" all the achievements of the far-famed *djins* or *genii* of Eastern diablerie. They conveyed Susan in a disembodied state across

the Atlantic, to visit John William in his American house of refuge, in a moment of time. A spirit named "Ernest" transported her in a similar condition to Calcutta, to call upon some friend in the "City of Palaces." On this occasion, "Ernest" got himself into a difficulty which seriously unsettled his spiritual equanimity. Disembodied "Bertie," the familiar diminutive of Susan Willis Fletcher, found it so agreeable—so light—so pleasant to be disembodied—to float airily among the angels and the stars, that "Ernest" and his friends experienced the greatest possible difficulty in inducing her to re-enter the cast-off tenement of clay. Happily, "Winona" came to the rescue, and her "medium," John William. "My inclination to reach him [*i.e.*, John William], became stronger than my desire to go to the angels; and so my spirit glided back into my body, and I found myself alone in my cell." What would have become of "Ernest" if this happy result had not been attained, we



tremble even to imagine. These are not *visions* as may be supposed: they are related to us as facts which have actually occurred within the experience of an American woman claiming to be a Roman Catholic, and to be in the possession of "sane mind, memory and understanding."

Experience shows that a full complement of brains is by no means necessary to enable a religious or a "spiritual" enthusiast to achieve success. That a person, therefore, of so enfeebled an understanding should succeed in making converts of weak-minded people ought not to surprise us. Bertie's spiritual accomplishments, such as they were, made a lasting impression on the warder whose husband had availed himself of the incarceration of the medium to "rap" himself into her remembrance, and she succeeded in making a disciple of this poor creature before she left her Majesty's prison of Clerkenwell. "It is needless to add," says our informant, "that a warder like this

did not remain long in the service." Judging by the letter which the poor woman wrote to the prisoner, after her release, we are inclined to think that she was altogether unfitted for such a position of trust.

But enough of Mrs. Susan Willis Fletcher and her personal history. We propose before closing this chapter to see something of the "mediums," and of the character, tone, and conversation of the so-called "spirits," with whom they profess to be connected, or whose "messages" to their friends in the flesh they claim to be the recipients, the deliverers, and the expounders.

Like all quacks who lived by quackery, the "mediums" claim of course to be endowed with special gifts of healing conferred upon them by the spirits, and which they exercise in conjunction with their other tricks of trade. Mrs. Fletcher tells us in an early part of her history that, she "got [*sic*] poisoned while at school; and my voluntary

nerves became so completely paralyzed, that I could move only my little fingers. Medicine had no effect upon me; but my mother-in-law, who was a healing medium, mesmerized and gradually cured me. The mesmerism or magnetism, differed from the usual kind in this: being a medium, *she was under the control of some spirit; and it was the controlling spirit who really magnetized and cured me.* The cure began where movement often ends. It began with the power to move my toes, and in a short time I had the control of the entire voluntary system."

She tells us further that in 1875 a stranger came to her "for a medical diagnosis. . . . He was I found, employed as a medical rubber by a gentleman on Beacon Hill, Boston, who had been given up by his physicians. The diagnosis given by my spirit-guides quite differed from that of the physicians; but as 'doctors disagree,' we need not be surprised when spirits differ from doctors. The

medical rubber was directed how to treat his patient. He was told to use *magnetized water and magnetized paper*, and was shown how to magnetize them. Under these instructions he became a strong, effective magnetizer, or mesmerist; and his patient in a few weeks—I think three weeks—happily recovered. For three months I examined the cases of his patients, and gave, or rather the spirits gave through me, directions for their treatment.” However preposterous the so-called “diagnosis” and treatment might have been, it must be remembered that the patient had *faith*, and where Faith lends her assistance, Nature, as in the case of the so-called “Miracles” at Lourdes, often does wonders. It is fair to add (and we believe her) that Mrs. Fletcher asserts that she received no compensation in these cases beyond “that of being the means of relieving suffering, which is the best [compensation] of all.” The “medical rubber” to whom our informant refers, afterwards set up in business as a

mesmeric healer or "healing medium;" which is the spiritualist equivalent of "medical quack," and Bertie—rightly or wrongly—gives us a very indifferant idea of his character.

John William and his wife had each a familiar spirit whom they called a "spirit-control," a description which must not be confounded with the ordinary "spirit-level." Fletcher's familiar was named "Winona," whose useful services were manifested amidst the Groves of Blarney, in the manner we have already described. Mrs. Fletcher's familiar was known by the name of "Dewdrop." The latter was, according to Dr. Nichols (an English or Anglo-American believer in Spiritualism) "professedly the spirit of an Indian girl, who speaks through Mrs. Fletcher when she is in a deep trance." We have the authority of Nichols for stating that she is a vivacious spirit. No one, he thinks, "can listen or converse with this spirit without believing in her personality, or *crediting*

*her medium with very marvellous powers;”* but how this Indian spirit came to talk English with a strong American accent, Dr. Nichols does not think it worth his while to explain, nor (on our part) do we think worth the trouble to inquire.

If we were inclined to become a “medium” which we very certainly are not, it would be only on account of the usefulness of the familiar. Mediums, by the way object to the term “familiar,” because it savours of witchcraft, and witchcraft is an imputation to which they, or rather we should say Mrs. Fletcher on their behalf, specially object. We incline, however, to retain it, on the ground that it is more manageable than the clumsy unauthorized compound of “spirit-control,” and more in accord with the office which the “spirit” seems to hold in relation to its “medium” or embodied agent. Her spiritual friendships it must be admitted saved Mrs. Fletcher a world of trouble which falls to the lot of ordinary mortals like

ourselves. "At school" (as we may well believe by after results) "they saved me from the labour of study, did my sums, wrote my exercises, [so managed\*] that I got many prizes and stood at the head of my class." They helped a gentleman [name not given] "to bring out an invention"—to make "a scientific and financial success," for which the gentleman [name not given] rewarded Mrs. Fletcher with a substantial acknowledgment, in the form of a bank note of one hundred dollars. "Mr. Wilson, Vice-President of the United States," a distinguished person hitherto unknown to us, called on the learned John William "about his health. The controlling spirit [through John William] gave him a diagnosis of his case," and gave him also to understand that "he could not remain six months

\* We interpolate these words on our own responsibility, failing to understand how a consistent neglect of the study of arithmetic and all other scholastic exercises (considered necessary by ordinary mortals), could procure the praiseworthy child who practised it, "many prizes," etc.

longer in this life, unless he retired from all active work." Wilson V.P. deciding not to give up work died within the space of three months afterwards, or as Mrs. Fletcher expresses it, "went to test the realities of the world of spirits." A medium bearing the rare and aristocratic name of Smith, lost while travelling in the land of Egypt "a considerable sum of money in Bank of England notes." "Winona" came to his assistance, and said in her sweetly refined and spiritual language, "Mr. Smith, you are awfully worried about something. I know what it is. You have lost some money. Don't fret about it. I will find it and bring it to you." Winona kept her word. Smith, we are told, after the *séance* went to bed, and found that the packet of Bank of England notes had been stuffed "under his pillow" by the benevolent spirit.

The spirits as might have been expected took the astute John William under their special protection. We are informed that in May 1877, he



“returned to London, where he was told —like the prophets of old—that “he must stay and do his work.” John William took rooms in the refined neighbourhood of Southampton Row, and not being too well known to the English public, “cast his bread upon the waters” by giving “free *séances*”; but the crowd that came to him soon compelled him to fix a price [of admission]. “The labourer,” adds Mrs. Fletcher, “is worthy of his hire,” although she does not show us who it was that hired “the labourer,” nor explain the precise terms of the contract. “They who serve the altar,” mysteriously adds the admiring wife, “must live by the altar. If lawyers, doctors, and clergymen are paid why not mediums?” Ah! why not? John William “served the altar” which he had set up in Southampton Row with excellent results. He came to London in May 1877, and next month we find him telegraphing to his wife the monosyllabic word “Come!” “Very shortly afterwards I joined

him" she tells us; and the pair thenceforth "served the altar"—whatever that may mean—in partnership, at No. 2, Vernon Place, Bloomsbury.

Written in defence of the "truths" of Spiritualism, it shows the weakness of this poor woman's mind, that she is quite unconscious of the grotesque light in which she has placed her "facts" before practical people. If we would seek an argument against the absurdity of the pretences set up by the believers in this monstrous fetish, we need go no farther than this book. She shows us the "spirits," who can only announce their presence to and carry on their conversation with outsiders by means of a series of clumsy "raps," hail-fellow-well-met in the society of their mediums. Even in matters spiritual the ancient proverb would seem to hold good, and the language and the manners of these ethereal beings are by no means improved by connection with their embodied associates. "Dewdrop" and "Winona," ethereal as they were, displayed the

jealous attributes of mere earthly beings. Both took a fancy to a distinguished gentleman named Low. One day Dewdrop said to Mr. Low, "I am going to weave the most beautiful scarf in colours to-night, I shall wear it round my *waist*, and I will twine it all about *you*." At the *séance*, however, *Winona* forestalled her spiritual rival: she "walked" up to Mr. Low, "wearing a coloured scarf . . . and said, 'Mr. Low, I like you *perzackly* [*sic*] as well as Dewdrop does: so I thought I would come and *do* the scarf instead.'" The result was a "spiritual" scene. "Dewdrop whisked out of the cabinet, *snatched* the scarf from *Winona*, and twined it round and round" the fascinating Low. She afterwards revenged herself by carrying off a bouquet which that gentleman had brought for her rival. Low seems to have produced sad discord among the shades, Dewdrop even condescending to designate her sister spirit as a "thief." On another occasion when Mrs. Fletcher was caged

in Clerkenwell prison, Dewdrop appeared to her. "You will see!" she said, "what kind of difficulties we spirits *get into* sometimes, and you must find out that when we can't do what we like we must do what we can. Come, *tottle along*, and we will have a *séance*." Had Dewdrop invited Bertie to join her in a *pas de deux* or a *gallopade de Fascination*, the proceedings we doubt not would have been spiritually *en règle*.

Familiars of this kind as might have been expected are capable of performing extraordinary tricks. A Mr. Eglinton received a missive from Mrs. Fletcher in the following manner—we relate the incident, by the way, for the special behoof of that enterprising firm, Messrs. Spiers & Pond. Eglinton who was probably connected with the historical tournament of that name, "was going *along* the Holborn Viaduct in an omnibus, when a spirit voice directed him to alight, *and go to some quiet room*. He stopped the omnibus, and wen

into the great hotel of Spiers & Pond, and into a vacant room, where, feeling something touch his thigh, he put down his hand, and found a letter *which had just been written by me in my cell in prison.*" This was Eglinton's own version of an experience, contracted, as it would seem, under the distinct influence of spirits probably of alcoholic tendency.

The late Mr. D. D. Home, who got himself into difficulties touching the transfer to himself of some £60,000, which belonged to a foolish English woman, named Lyon, "according to the testimony of the Earl of Balcarres (then Lord Lindsay,) and the Earl of Dunraven (then Lord Adare,) . . . was carried out of one window, and brought in at another, floating in the air in a horizontal position about seventy feet from the pavement." Mrs. Fletcher informs us that arrangements had been made by the "spirits" to float her in a precisely similar fashion over the walls of Clerken-

well prison, "thirty feet high." "A time was appointed to do it;" one of her friends was directed to wait for her at a particular place "outside the wall." The friend waited an hour or thereabouts and then apparently went home to bed. "Bertie" had refused to accept the aid of "Ernest" (who had undertaken to do the floating business,) from conscientious motives which she thus explains to us: "My warder," she tells us, "and other prison officers would have got into serious trouble. Warders and porters would have been discharged, and perhaps punished. They would have lost their pensions, and the public would have believed that they had been bribed to assist me 'to escape.'" Although we think this highly probable, we wish in the interest of "Ernest" and Spiritualism generally, that the "floating" had been carried out in its entirety. The reason why it was not effected is, we need not say, most satisfactorily explained.

Among the shades who favoured Mrs. Fletcher with their society, was one named "Joey," possibly the ghost of Grimaldi "of that ilk." "Joey" kindly consented to preside at "a birth-day festival," given by Mrs. Fletcher in "her own house in Malvern." He "sat" we are told, "in a good light talking to us, and cut a birth-day cake, and poured out glasses of wine, which he brought to each person in the room. He then in sight of all, *cut a good slice of cake for himself, and ate it, and then pouring out a glass of wine, gave and drank* the toast of the evening—'Long life, health, and happiness to his hostess,' adding, 'God bless you and give you strength to do your work,'"—the work that is to say of making money. Whether "Joey" afterwards favoured the company with "hot codlins," as he was accustomed in the flesh to favour his audiences at Old Drury, does not appear. "Joey," it will be observed, was a singularly hilarious spirit. He would oftentimes kiss "Bertie;"

and was fond of listening to the strains of a musical box, which he would wind for himself. Musical boxes appear to have been scarce in the region in which the spirit of "Joey" disports itself when not engaged in taking the chair at "birthday festivals." "He had not heard one," he asserted, "for so long a time!"

Mrs. Susan Willis Fletcher is not mad, as American people at least count madness. She simply represents a class of women happily unknown in this country, who are brought up under conditions which are detrimental to the natural development of a healthily constituted mind. Her "all-absorbing desire," as she expresses it, in writing this rubbish of nearly five hundred pages (a fair type of the trash which is permitted to issue from American presses), "is to serve in every way in her power the cause of Spiritualism," in which cause we honestly regard her in some degree in the light of a martyr. Whether she has served that cause well or



judiciously so far as England is concerned, may be open to question. For our part, the story of "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves," of "Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp," of the "Adventures of Sindbad the Sailor," are infinitely more interesting than Mrs. Fletcher's ungrammatical narrative, and they have moreover the advantage of coherency, a quality which is conspicuous by its absence in this preposterous farrago of nonsense, which sets forth the "truth" and the claims of Spiritualism.









